"Period of Perilous Transformation":

Labour and Land commodities and the environmental crisis

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Abstract

This paper uses the critical apparatus developed by Karl Polanyi in *The Great Transformation* to identify the ways in which the treatment of both labour and land as commodities have negative effects on society and the natural environment. Commodified labour is identified as coercive, non-democratic and anti-social, and disembedded from the society in which the labourer and the firm is situated. Similarly, the commodity status of land encourages the ignoring of the specific environmental and social context of that land. In contrast to the commodity, the non-commodity brings with it many and specific social responsibilities and many society members have access to it; it does not stay in the possession of one society member for long. Despite the ubiquity of labour and land commodities, efforts to decommodify both labour and land spring up spontaneously in many places. The examination of decommodified labour reveals that the commonly held beliefs about work – that it is a disutility that people undertake only for gain, and that the optimal organization form is a top-down hierarchy - turn out to be erroneous. Similarly, ownership of land tends to result in its degradation and the degradation of other parcels, while simultaneously fragmenting and degrading human society. This paper suggests Universal Basic Income at just above subsistence level as a way to decommodify labour to realize social benefits such as emphasis on the work rather than the wage, work becomes voluntary not coerced, varied and democratic, and environmental benefits from the elimination of environmentally harmful industries. Community Land Trusts based on Transition Towns are suggested to decommodify land, environmental benefits being realized through democratic land use decision making and community self-provisioning and sustainability projects on the Transition Town model.

Keywords: Fictitious commodities, de-commodification, labour, land, Ecologized, UBI, CLT, Transition Town

Foreword

This paper addresses my concentration on the anthropogenic causes of environmental problems, citizens' actions in addressing those causes, and governance and cultural approaches to addressing the activities that lead to environmental degradation.

I had initially come into the program to study why renewable energy technologies had not been adopted more quickly -- and had even been obstructed – despite the very serious consequences of the continued burning of fossil fuels.

This was not such a difficult question to answer. The fossil fuel companies and other companies heavily involved in the fossil fuel energy infrastructure would stand to lose much by a switch to renewable energy technologies. It turns out that the reasons for anthropogenic causes of environmental degradation lie deeply entwined in the social and economic fabric of the dominant economies on the planet.

I studied some of the heterodox economists and systems thinking in order to understand where the 'leverage point" -- to use a term coined by Donella Meadows – was where pressure could be applied to society to 'flip' it into a different society – one characterized by environmental sustainability and social justice.

Karl Polanyi's *The Great Transformation* provides an excellent lens through which to view the current societal and environmental problems. *The Great Transformation,* in touching on the acts of enclosure and the late mediaeval transition from feudalism to capitalism, provides a compelling view of a leverage point that changed the character of mediaeval English society, and from there changed economies across the world.

In Karl Polanyi's identification of labour and land as 'fictional' commodities, we can see two institutions fundamental to modern technological industrial society that play a significant role in the human activities that lead to environmental degradation. An extractive corporation buys mining rights and with the western concept of ownership, they may extract and none may stop them from doing so. Similarly, they employ people whose living depends upon that extraction, whether those employees support the activities or not.

Commodified land and labour are cultural economic institutions. Much work has gone into instituting them as such and much work goes into maintaining these institutions. Just as instituting land and labour as commodities had a role in the industrial revolution, so re-instituting land and labour as non-commodities could well precipitate a number of changes in human societies to more environmentally and socially sustainable societies.

This paper addresses four of my components. I look at citizen movements that de-commodify both land and labour. I look at existing and proposed governance mechanisms that indirectly affect humans' interaction with the environment, and I look at solutions to the environmental crisis.

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1. **Introduction**:

Fictional Commodities and the Environmental Crisis

Karl Polanyi was an Austrian economist who worked to understand the problems of the early twentieth century - the first world war, the great depression, the rise of fascism and the arms race that led to the second world war. He was a true interdisciplinarian who turned to the study of social history, economic history and the young discipline of anthropology to help him understand both the economy – in contrast and comparison to historical economies - and to understand these great problems of the age. It was with this understanding that he was able to see what connected these seemingly disparate events, and with which he wrote the book, *The Great Transformation*. It is in this book where he first explores the key concepts for which he is known, and which form the basis for this paper – fictitious commodities, and embedding.[1]

Fictitious commodities are money, and as is the focus of this paper, land and labour, which have been transformed into commodities for sale on markets, with the intention of the seller realizing a profit. Polanyi contended that the full commodification of labour and land places humans and society on the one hand, and nature on the other in grievous danger, and that no society could withstand the effects of the full commodification of labour and land.[2]

Embedding and *disembedding* describe the extent to which society has conscious deliberate control over its economy, and how the economy is bound up within social and cultural norms and understanding. Polanyi identified the market economy as disembedded from society, in that it runs according to its own

[1] Gareth Dale, *Karl Polanyi: The Limits of the Market*, 1 edition (Cambridge ; Malden, MA: Polity, 2010). 15 - 18
[2] Ibid. 60

motivations – that of acquisitiveness – and has its own institutions.[3] Polanyi felt that this separation from other institutions of human society results in a disconnect between society and individual society members which in turn led to moral degradation.[4] This term, however, can be applied to a wide range of phenomena to describe a disconnect between society and phenomena which make up that society, in the case of the argument of this paper, land and labour become disembedded from society through their commodification.

This paper uses Polanyi's ideas of fictitous commodities and disembedding as a starting point from which to explore the commodification of labour and land and the problems this causes for individuals, society, and the natural environment. After exploring these problems, the paper then looks at ways in which people have found spaces within commodified society to decommodify both labour and land and how the decommodification benefits individuals, society, and the natural environment. The paper then suggests viable ways in which both labour and land could be decommodified on a formal and national and perhaps international scale in such a way as to maximize the benefits to the individual, to society and to the natural environment.

A "commodity", as defined by Polanyi and also for the purposes of this paper, has three characteristics: first, it is a consciously produced thing or service; second, the intention is to sell it on the market; and thirdly, it is done so with the purpose of realizing a profit. Polanyi referred to labour and land commodities as "fictional":

> Labor is only another name for a human activity which goes with life itself, which in its turn is not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from

[3] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time*, 1 edition (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001). 60
[4] Dale, *Karl Polanyi*. 202

> the rest of life, be stored or mobilized; land is only another name for nature, which is not produced by man.[5]

Labour cannot be separated from the labourer; labour is a person's life. And, land is where people live. The commodification of labour and land is thus, according to Polanyi, the commodification of life and home. He stated that they could not be completely commodified, doing so would annihilate the labourer and the land. If a commodity is a thing created with the purpose of being sold on a market in order for the seller to realize a profit, then labour fits this categorization very poorly. It cannot be put on a shelf to wait for a buyer with a good price. It has to be used immediately or it is lost forever, and more pressingly if not bought, the labourer goes without subsistence.

Similarly, land fits uneasily in the categorization as commodity. While it can be bought and sold and profit realized, it cannot be rolled up and moved elsewhere, and it has a wide range of value beyond the exchange value realized in its sale. The sale of land treats land as fungible - one piece of land is the same as another piece of land of equal price. But, the communities of plants and animals that live on one piece of land provide a flow of different ecosystem services to those on another similarly priced piece of land, and in any case they are all largely irreplaceable. This is pertinent as land, treated as a commodity, would require action to be done with it for its owner to realize profit. Some activities that do yield profit - mining, construction, timber harvesting, agriculture and indeed recreation for example - involve at least the disruption of ecosystems and sometimes their elimination. In some extreme cases where profit making activities rely on the production of ecosystems, such as industrial commercial fishing, they can precipitate the collapse of fisheries on which they rely for profit, despite it being in their interests not to do so, and despite there being rules in place to prevent such a thing.[6]

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[5] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*. 187

[6] Elinor Ostrom, "The Challenge of Common-Pool Resources," *Environment: Science and Policy for Sustainable Development* 50, no. 4 (2008):11-13.

As we can see, labour and land fit very ill in the category of commodity, and problems will arise if they are treated as such. Polanyi said “leaving the fate of soil and people to the market would be tantamount to annihilating them.”[7]

Section one of this paper is divided in two parts. The first part explores the concept of the commodity as it is conceived in market societies. The commodity is disembedded from society and the environment in a way that objects and phenomena in other societies are not. In market societies the owners of commodities can dispose of commodities in any way they see - fit to generate profit if they are a for-profit concern or according to taste, whim or caprice. This conception of the commodity as property is explored in its connection to wage labour. It is a commodity for the labourer to realize, if not profit, then at least as high a wage as he or she can. Other commodities can be ‘bought’ to improve the profitability of the labour commodity in the form of education or volunteer hours. The labourer, however, is not realizing profit, but a living -- his or her operating costs as it were -- and as such is coerced into working.

The second part of section one looks at land as a commodity and we see a similar disembedding from social and environmental context as we did with labour. By entering into a system of realizing profit from land, societies generate serious negative social and environmental consequences. In cities, people are pushed out of their communities through rising land prices. This results in both fractured communities and fractured natural habitat through the growth of commuting infrastructure, and increased GHG emissions and other forms of oil pollution. In this section we also explore the consequences of ownership of land for forestry purposes. The commodity status of land encourages maximum harvesting in the form of clearcutting. This is the lowest cost method with the highest return, but the environmental implications are also the most severe.

[7] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.137

In section two, we look at efforts to de-commodify labour and land, and the social and environmental benefits these efforts bring. Time-banking, volunteer work, and the phenomena of Linux and Wikipedia are explored. What we see is a strong counter to the general assumption of classical and neo-classical economics that work is a disutility to be undertaken only for the highest return. In fact, we would argue that the urge to labour for the good of community and for joy of creation is strong. Also, the examples of Wikipedia and Linux and Wikipedia suggest that the coercive top-down hierarchical structure that characterizes most wage labour contexts is not the only way to organize labour, and possibly not even the optimum one from an environmental standpoint.

From there we look at an example of de-commodified land in the community gardens in New York. Here we find people spontaneously taking land and developing quite complex use and care strategies for it, along with generating an improvement in the experience of the community. We also see an increase in biodiversity.

In the final chapter we look at possible governance tools to formally de-commodify both labour and land. Universal Basic Income (UBI) is suggested to de-commodify labour as it would have the benefit of removing the coercion to work. UBI would also force firms to compete for labour by making the work environment more attractive by, for example, introducing more democracy within the firm. We could expect whole industries to disappear, including the environmentally destructive ones, seeing as the pressures of the wage have been removed.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) based on a Transition Town style ethos of sustainability and food sovereignty is put forward as a suggestion of how to simultaneously de-commodify land, by taking it out of market circulation, and implementing democratic land-use institutions. The Transition Initiative model is used to illustrate community building projects working towards sustainability and self-provision.

These suggestions can seem a radical departure from the way things are done at the moment, but there has been political interest in them for decades - field experiments with UBI, and there are many operating CLTs in the US. If rolled out on a large scale, they could precipitate a change in culture and economic organisation that could start to roll back the environmental degradation as well as foster healthier communities.

2. Fictional Commodities: Labour and Land

2.1. The Commodity

The commodity is a curiously modern thing. Its definition - something produced to be sold on the market in order to realize profit - describes most things and many interactions in the developed world. We live in, around, with, and by them. We put them in our bodies – food – and sometimes what leaves our bodies can be commodities. Not the digested food, but trade in organs for transplant, a child for adoption. On the other hand, with the development of faecal bacteriotherapy - faecal transplants – and donors being paid cash for their donations, faeces is now a commodity.[8] And, as is the focus of this paper, the work we do to earn a living is a commodity, and the very space we and non-human inhabitants of earth occupy and call home is a commodity. We define our identities by them and with them.[9]

Karl Polanyi stated that land and labour were unsuitable for the commodity designation and that their full commodification would result in the annihilation of both the land and society. The problem Polanyi identified with labour when commodified is that to separate it

[8] Rachel Feltman, "You Can Earn $13,000 a Year Selling Your Poop," *Washington Post*, accessed May 21, 2016, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/speaking-of-science/wp/2015/01/29/you-can-earn-13000-a-year-selling-your-poop/.
[9] Michael Watts et al., "Commodities," *Introducing Human Geographies*, 1999, 391.

> from other activities of life and to subject it to the laws of the market was to annihilate all forms of existence and to replace them by a different type of organization, an atomistic and individualistic one.[10]

Commodifying labour has a distinct and profound effect on individuals and society, fostering individualism and dissolving the social bonds between society's members.

At the same time as it fosters individualism, it also denigrates the individual labourers through the essential fungibility of the commodified labourer. The great power of the commodity is its fungibility, its utter anonymity. It is utterly shorn of its context both its social and its environmental context. One cannot divine from a TV set where it was made, when, or by whom, or what environmental cost is represented by that TV. This might not seem such a terrible thing for a TV, but when applied to workers, to human beings it can have some discomfiting consequences. People lose jobs if the company for which they work moves their operations to a jurisdiction with lower labour costs. The labour of a person in one area is no different from the labour of a person in another area, but whole towns and cities have been transformed by industries packing up and moving.[11]

Polanyi's term, 'disembedding' can be applied to labour to describe the fungible nature of commodified labour, the shearing of labour's meaning and place in society and in the wider natural environment.[12] It is referred to by the terms 'labour market' and 'human resources', and is measured quantitatively. For example, in the news it is reported that Canada added 14,000 new jobs.[13] The qualitative effects of labour on individuals, families, and communities is not emphasized - not the income gained (or lost), and

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[10] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.
[11] John Nichols, "The Nation: The 'New GM': Layoffs, Factory Closings, Offshoring," *NPR.org*, June 2, 2009, http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=104815923.
[12] Peter G. Brown and Peter Timmerman, *Ecological Economics for the Anthropocene: An Emerging Paradigm* (New York : Columbia University Press, 2015). 24
[13] "Jobless Rate Ticks down to 6.9% as Canada Surprises with 14,000 New Jobs in May," *CBC News*, accessed July 23, 2016, http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/jobs-canada-may-1.3628360.

not the effect of the nature of the work on the individual or the community. This fungibility of commodified labour, while it has obvious negative effects on individuals, families, and communities, it also negatively affects the natural environment through increased product miles and carbon footprint as manufacturing is located further and further from its end market, and through choice of siting of operations being made due to less stringent environmental regulations.[14]

Another aspect of labour as commodity that causes problems is its value. It is constituted quantitatively through exchange value – money – rather than qualitatively. The wage tells us nothing in particular about the job except that it is of less value than a higher paying job and of more value than a lower paying job. Payment for work also disembeds the labour from its social and environmental context. It is easy to see the value of the work as consisting in the wage rather than in the specific value to the environment and the community.

2.2. Criteria for Identifying commodified labour

These are the characteristics that define commodified labour which shall be explored in the following section:

I. Coercion
II. Self-commodification of employees and prospective employees
III. Focus on exchange value rather than use-value
IV. Constricted opportunity for performing.
V. Exchange / Use value

[14] Thomas Birtchnell and William Hoyle, "Digital Cargo: 3D Printing for Development at the 'Bottom of the Pyramid,'" in *Cargomobilities: Moving Materials in a Global Age*, 2015, 199, https://books-google-ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=kqcGCAAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PA199&dq=digital+cargo+birtchnell&ots=yU9gbwVmwW&sig=IdcEiy9CLhPtbpCcATgS3-IqsLA.

VI. Constrictive

VII. Anti-social nature of commodified labour.

I. Coercion

A great problem for both the worker and the wider social and environmental context is that wage labour is coerced. Ostensibly the waged labourer or employee is an agent able to choose freely the position that he or she feels best represents the highest return for the lowest expenditure. In theory, the labourer can play one employee off against the other, they are competing for the labourer. As with any commodity on the market, the price is supposed to reach an equilibrium. The wages are not supposed to be too low as to beggar the labourer, and likewise they are not supposed to go so high as to make the firm purchasing the labour power unable to function.

II. Coercion to work

This, however, is not quite how the labour market works. The problem with this as applied to labour has been pointed out by Karl Marx and by Karl Polanyi, who derived some of his theoretical apparatus through study of Marx's work, and coined the term "fictitious commodity" to describe labour in the market system. Unlike other commodities, labour cannot be stored up for later use. Time spent not labouring is potential labour forever lost.[15] Furthermore, labourers exchange their labour not for profit, not for surplus, but for bare subsistence - for their operating costs, as it were. For the worker, labour-time not spent labouring is not just potential labour wasted, but a serious threat to the mental and, in some cases, physical well-being of the labourer. Without wages the labourer is without means of

[15] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*. Ch 6

subsistence and has to rely on charity, family, or state welfare programs, or other less conventional, less socially acceptable sources of subsistence.

Consequently, while a worker has some degree of choice in the jobs he or she applies for, the worker *must* take a job, and this may mean sacrificing various social and environmental values if the wage is high enough, and the work conditions agreeable enough, and the choice of work is sufficiently limited.

III. Coercion at work

Similarly, while the labourer has limited options of opting out of commodified labour, once the labourer is employed, the employer decides when the worker works and for how long. This can be a problem in that the labourer may be required by his or her employer to work very long hours restricting him or her from time spent with the family. The obverse is true. The labourer may be required irregularly. This has been identified as a growing problem in Canada, and is known by the term "precarious employment".[16]

While workers have no control over whether or not they work or how long they work. They also have no control over what they do while at work. The employer having purchased the workers' labour owns it and can dispose of it as he or she pleases and decides what they do and how they do it. Polanyi highlights the lack of democratic control over economic activity[17], and similarly, there is little to no democracy in the workplace afforded the employees.

IV. Commodified labour equals commodified labourer

A further aspect of commodified labour that is a problem that needs to be addressed is suggested by Polanyi's insight that labour is the life of a person[18] and Marx's identification of labour as an innate

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[16] Sara Mojtehedzadeh and Laurie Monsebraaten, "Precarious Work Is Now the New Norm, United Way Report Says," *Thestar.com*, accessed June 21, 2016, https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2015/05/21/precarious-work-is-now-the-new-norm-united-way-report-says.html.
[17] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*. Ch 19
[18] Ibid. 79

human expressive need.[19] Labour is not detachable from a person, and it is an essential aspect of the identity of a person. Consequently, as people are required to sell their labour as a commodity, they tend to treat themselves as commodities.

What's certain however, is that prospective employees put a lot of time, effort, and money investment in making their labour power a more attractive and valuable commodity for prospective employers. They purchase commodities in the form of further education and work clothes. Indeed, an unpaid internship or volunteering position taken on to pad out a resume can be viewed as a purchase in that it was an experience that cost the wage that it might reasonably have been expected to pay, but that it didn't pay.

Furthermore, some positions - especially those in the service industry - require certain behaviour from their employees. Fisher gives the example of employer mandated 'creativity' and individual 'self-expression' as illustrated in the motion picture *Office Space* with the example of a waitress who was required to express herself by decorating her uniform with buttons and badges.[20] Indeed, in call centres that service North America which are located in India, the employees are sometimes required to present themselves as North American to the extent that they alter a basic part of their identity and give Western sounding names.[21] Employment in this extreme case has usurped the personal identity of the employee.

V. Exchange / Use value

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[19] Karl Marx and Ernest Mandel, *Capital: Volume 1: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes, Reprint edition (London ; New York, N.Y: Penguin Classics, 1992). 283 - 4

[20] Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?* (John Hunt Publishing, 2009), 39 - 40 https://books-google-ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ibN3fGpW1DIC&oi=fnd&pg=PA1&dq=capitalist+realism&ots=U3hhHA1X7y&sig=OwtmbjyMeIcrGJ9nxAxCqAQLuOQ.

[21] John W. Budd, *The Thought of Work*, Cornell Paperbacks (Ithaca, N.Y: ILR Press, 2011). 160

Yet another aspect of waged employment that is pertinent to our examination is that of the conflict between use value and exchange value.[22] With commodified labour there is a tendency to focus on the exchange value rather than the use value: "how much am I getting for this job?" or even "how much do they value me and my work?" rather than "what am I doing and for what reason?" Likewise, in a market society, the firm that employs the labourer has its sights on exchange value. While they are buying the use value, their ultimate aim is not so much the provision of a service, but the realization of profits.

While the elements of wage labour identified above, most clearly represent disadvantages to the labourer, this element of the wage labourer / employer relationship is the one that most clearly represents a threat to the environment. If both the employers and the employees are working for exchange value rather than for the use value of their activities, environmentally destructive activities can the more easily be missed, ignored, or rationalized by their profitability.

VI. Constrictive

The wage labourer is employed to fill one specific role, the duties of which are outlined and codified in the contract of employment. If the worker wishes to do something else then he or she needs to petition his or her employer to modify the role. More likely, the worker would have to apply for a different position either within the firm or at a different firm. In order to increase the chances of being hired, the worker would most likely have to train in the role with the new desired activities, and receive formal qualifications to list in a resume, and as is often the case, the worker would benefit from experience in a paid position using the skills and knowledge of this different role. There is a catch 22 situation for many workers, changing or even starting out in positions that in order to get paid employment in a role, the

[22] Marx and Mandel, *Capital*. Ch. 7

employer often requires that the applicant has previously had experience in such a role -- hence the growing reliance on volunteer work to pad out the 'experience' section of a resume.

This takes a lot of time, effort and money to have a less than certain chance of experiencing work in a different role. There is, therefore, a great disincentive to try in new roles.

VII. Anti-social

Lastly, waged labour is inherently anti-social. There are attempts to build a social element to labour.[23] In some sectors there is mandated socializing as one of the workplace activities. There are however, objections to this that reveal the cultural view of work in market societies, one commentator says "After all, the point of having a job is to get work done—not to develop a whole new set of friendships". And indeed, the socializing appears to be part of the process of the employer investing in the commodity work with socializing offering opportunities to network with higher ups and get information in workplace advancement.[24]

This notwithstanding, the workplace generally works along the model where the employer has purchased the worker's labour with the intention of realizing profit. The social element of work is, at the very best, a way to keep employees happy, and more importantly, productive. It's often irrelevant, however, and at worst a distraction and actively discouraged. Hence, work colleagues will socialize *after* work. While they may chat at work, they perceive of work as a place where socializing does not happen, and therefore they must go to another location to socialize properly.

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[23] "'Miss Manners' Says No to Mandatory Workplace Friendships," *Wisconsin Public Radio*, December 9, 2013, http://www.wpr.org/miss-manners-says-no-mandatory-workplace-friendships.

[24] Mikki Kendall, "What's so Bad about Mandatory Workplace Socializing?," *Quartz*, accessed July 22, 2016, http://qz.com/623260/whats-so-bad-about-mandatory-workplace-socializing/.

2.3. Owning labour

The Setswana speaking people of the Southern Africa have two words that correspond to the English word 'work': *dina* and *bereka. Dina* refers to work that is self-directed. It is viewed positively, building one's identity and contributing to the community. *Bereka* is derived from the Afrikans *werk,* and refers to wage labour. It is viewed as detrimental to one's character and sense of well-being.[25]

In Europe in the beginnings of capitalism, there is a sense that work was viewed as similarly distasteful. The powerful had to create a pool of people who would work by driving off their traditionally used common lands by appropriating them through enclosure. Even then those who didn't work were given some stark incentives to seek paid employment. Through the Henry VIII's reign, someone refusing work could be flogged, branded on the head with the letter 'S' for 'slave', and even executed.[26] This is a far cry from industrialized countries where, for most people, joblessness means not branding but pronounced relative poverty.

What is particularly unnerving about the treatment of vagabonds in Henry VIII's time, is the branding of 'S' on the head. The word slave is something with extremely negative connotations – beside thoughts of the horrifying human cost and repercussions of the transatlantic slave trade, there is the idea of a wholesale loss of agency and autonomy. But the term slavery has been applied to the concept of waged employment. Karl Marx compared paid employment to slavery in regard to his theory of alienation.[27]

Paid employment is no longer presented as a choice between on the one hand starvation, branding, and execution, and on the other paid employment. It is understood in the terms used to describe actions

[25] Budd, *The Thought of Work*. 55.
[26] Pauline E. Peters, "Beyond Embeddedness: A Challenge Raised by a Comparison of the Struggles over Land in African and Post-Socialist Countries," *Changing Properties of Property. New York and Oxford, Berghahn Books* 84105 (2006). 96.
[27] Budd, *The Thought of Work*. 51

within the market, as an exchange between equals. The would-be-worker, surveys the employers, and chooses one that offers the best price for labour. The would-be-worker seeks the best price in order to maximise his or her individual utility.

In this narrative, the employer is trying to find the best price too. The employer is, however, looking for a low price at which to buy the labour. If the price the employer offers is too low, the would-be-worker goes elsewhere. The price of labour is theorized to stabilize to an optimum point between the offered price and desired price.

When the employer buys labour, what actually is it that the employer owns? The importance of defining what's owned can be seen by comparing the examples of different conceptions of what is being sold by the worker. In the 19th century, Germany and the UK were industrializing at roughly the same time. In Germany, it was conceived as paying for labour. The worker was paid every time he or she performed a certain action. In Britain, the conception of the wage labour was influenced by the earlier industrial system, the *putting out* system where merchants purchased goods manufactured by artisans in their own homes or workshops and thus conceived of it as paying for the goods that the labourers produced. Strikes in England were concerned with the workers rates of pay. This contrasts with the reasons behind strikes in Germany where workers were much more likely to express grievances about the work process. This is important as the expression of what's paid for and owned shapes the nature of the disputes.

Karl Marx theorized that it was not so much the labourer's time or products that were owned, not even the labour but the labour power. That is to say *the ability to work* is owned by the company that employs the labourer. The skills and abilities, and indeed the life experience of the worker up to the point where the labourer is on the clock, and the control over what he or she does during work hours is

owned by the employer to dispose with as he or she deems fit. The parallels with slavery, in this reading, are difficult to miss, and Marx and indeed other commentators have referred to work as wage slavery.[28]

The issue here is that should the firm be engaged in an activity that is detrimental to the environment or to communities, the individual workers have very little control over what they do and how they work, and they have strong incentives to keep working.

Another Marxian concept that is relevant to analyzing the link between labour as a commodity and environmental degradation is commodity fetishism. In the capitalist system, while the price of a commodity is a function of its scarcity in relation to its demand, this price is seen by the members of the society as an inherent quality of the commodity. This is the same with paid employment. The wage in a certain employment sector is seen not only to be a natural and inherent part of the job, because price is a way of assessing the value of a commodity. A high wage confers not only buying power on the wage earner but also prestige, self-esteem and a sense that one is an important and valued person.[29] More than that, jobs which command higher wages are seen as more valuable and more important and that the sector where those jobs occur is also seen as important.[30]

The difference between the commodity and the non-commodity is the relationships between the members of the community. The non-commodity in many cases compels pro-social behaviour between the members of the community, whereas the commodity requires no responsibility of its owner to his or her fellow and in some cases can play a starring role in anti-social behaviour.

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[28] Ibid. 43

[29] Donald G. Gardner, Linn Dyne, and Jon L. Pierce, "The Effects of Pay Level on Organization-Based Self-Esteem and Performance: A Field Study," *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 77, no. 3 (2004): 307–322.

[30] Eilis Lawlor et al., *A Bit Rich: Calculating the Real Value to Society of Different Professions* (New Economics Foundation, 2009).4, 5

What then happens when labour and land are treated as commodities? Like a good or a service, in a market society, labour is exchanged for something of equivalent value to the labour performed. This equivalent value is honoured by money. Polanyi, identified this as a serious problem saying that it would lead to the annihilation of 'the human and natural substance of society; it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness."[31] Unlike oil or wheat, or consumer electronics, labour cannot be stored and used at a later date, for the physical bearer of the labour in the market society needs to exchange his or her labour for money constantly.[32]

Polanyi, along with other commentators, draws attention to the fact that this last point was in fact used to help create a vast pool of the labour commodity for developing industry to draw upon at the beginning of the industrial revolution. In fact, the prospect of hunger was used to compel people to exchange their labour for money. Classical economists – Malthus and Ricardo, drawing on Vicar Joseph Townend's dissertation - contended that only the very real imminent threat of hunger would spur the lower classes to spurn the vices sloth and lethargy and to turn to honest labour and other virtues.[33] Hunger was used to coerce people into working for money.[34]

Today, in the developed world at least, the threat of starvation has retreated somewhat, but the threat of unemployment, which has a strong detrimental effect on the jobseeker's well-being and mental health,[35] still forms a strong impetus to take a job, any job. Indeed it has been suggested that it is used by employers as a disciplining tool for their workers.[36]

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[31] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*. 3
[32] Ibid. 76
[33] Joseph Townend, "A Dissertation on the Poor Laws," accessed May 10, 2016, http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/econ/ugcm/3ll3/townsend/poorlaw.html.
[34] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.Ch. 10
[35] Karsten I. Paul and Klaus Moser, "Unemployment Impairs Mental Health: Meta-Analyses," *Journal of Vocational Behavior* 74, no. 3 (2009): 264–282.
[36] Carl Shapiro and Joseph E. Stiglitz, "Equilibrium Unemployment as a Worker Discipline Device," *American Economic Review* 74, no. 3 (June 1984): 433.

Coercion at work can be a problem. As a commodity that is bought by the employer, within reason no one but the employer has any say over how that work should be put to use, including the bearer of the labour commodity him- or herself! In some cases the work can be extremely distressing for those who live in the vicinity of the workplace. The open-face coalmines of Appalachia are a case in point. They are more commonly known by the term mountaintop-removal, as the process most commonly used recently to mine the coal results in a flattening of the mountain. This can be distressing for the nearby residents and even some of the workers, but they have relatively little control over whether or not they carry out this activity.

Along with the generic effect of any section of the fossil fuel industry, namely the warming of the earth's atmosphere, and subsequent changing of the climate and the serious effects on the biosphere, there are other very serious environmental effects associated with this particular practice. Over two thousand square miles of forest have been cleared or damaged in the process of clearing the overburden in order that mining activities can take place to access the coal. This compounds the climate damage of the enterprise as it represents a loss of over three million tonnes of annual carbon sequestration. Moreover, the deforestation fragments the forest and changes the character of the forest thus threatening the biotic communities that compose the forest ecosystem. It looks terrible. The landscape after mountaintop removal has been described as a moonscape. On top of this, the materials used in the mining process contribute to birth defects and increased mortality in the region surrounding the mines.[37]

Understandably, there is strong opposition to mountaintop removal among Appalachian residents even though the area is characterized by poverty and coal mining presents lucrative employment

[37] Rob Perks, "Appalachian Heartbreak: Time to End Mountaintop Removal Coal Mining," *NRDC*, November 9, 2009, https://www.nrdc.org/resources/appalachian-heartbreak-time-end-mountaintop-removal-coal-mining.

opportunities.[38] There is political opposition, from both Democrats and Republicans, to mountain top removal. Despite this, these mining practices continue suggesting the power of individual mining concerns. There is, crucially, opposition to mountaintop removal among the miners themselves that stretches back to the 70's. For example, Miners for Democracy - a union caucus - fought for workplace safety, but linked this to demands for more environmentally friendly mining practices, including a ban on mountain top removal. Also, in the early 70s, women from communities affected by the mining occupied a mine in protest against the destruction of the landscape around them. They discovered that the miners sympathized with their cause. The miners told them, expressing the coercion inherent in their waged employment, that they wouldn't mine this way if they did not have to, if there were other jobs that they could do.[39]

There is an analogous case in the tarsands in Northern Alberta, where mining activities are as harmful to the health of ecosystems and nearby human residents as mountaintop removal is in the Appalachians. One worker employed in Alberta mining activities quit his job to found the organization *Iron and Earth*. This organization is founded on the premise that tarsands oil operations contribute to environmental destruction and that workers in those operations have skills that can and should be applied to alternative energy projects. This organization not only advocates for green energy projects and for retraining opportunities for tarsands workers to work on renewable energy projects, but it also undertakes green energy projects itself.[40] He illustrates the choice that faces someone working in a field with which they disagree: put up with it or leave.

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[38] Trip Van Noppen, "Mountaintop-Removal Mining Is Unpopular Even in Coal Country," *Grist*, August 17, 2011, http://grist.org/coal/2011-08-16-mountaintop-removal-mining-poll-unpopular-even-in-appalachia/.
[39] Trish Kahle, "Rank-and-File Environmentalism," *Jacobin*, accessed May 10, 2016, https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/06/rank-and-file-environmentalism/.
[40] Liam Britten, "Oil May Have Crashed, but Tradespeople Have Opportunities in Green Energy, Boilermaker Says," *CBCNews*, accessed May 10, 2016, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/green-energy-trades-jobs-1.3528246.

Another worker in the tarsands illustrates the other option: putting up with it. Ken Smithe spoke at COP21 (the international conference where representatives of governments and organizations discuss implementation of international climate change action). There he expressed an understanding of climate change and its ultimate source in the burning of fossil fuels including the ones he works in producing. He also said that his colleagues out in Northern Alberta understand what's happening with the climate and why, and what the dangerous consequences will likely be if serious action were not taken to reverse the process. This knowledge of climate change had been reinforced by the forest fires that have occurred in Northern Alberta and Northern Saskatchewan.

He spoke of the transition away from carbon based energy carriers that he felt was necessary, but he also expressed the fear of being left behind: "how are we going to provide for our families.' This is not a person who feels he's in the position to leave his job to try to start the energy transition. He did, however, to travel to COP21 and made the case that energy workers be given consideration by society and be helped in the transition to the new energy society.

This is a stereotypical worker who illustrates the problems of labour as a commodity. He has a healthy fear of the long term dangers represented by changes to our climate that are projected to happen and are already happening, but he also has near term fears about his ability to provide for himself and his family and thus feels unable to leave his job. These fears are joined by a further fear, that he may lose his job anyway. He foresees a time when fossil fuel companies will have to switch focus to renewable energy or go under due to a future transition to renewable energy technologies.[41]

[41] Mychaylo Prystupa, "At COP21, Oil Sands Worker Urges Smooth Transition off Fossil Fuels," *National Observer*, December 8, 2015, http://www.nationalobserver.com/2015/12/08/news/cop21-oil-sands-worker-urges-smooth-transition-fossil-fuels.

Workers, as well as having little to no control over what they do or how they work, are also fungible. A worker is a worker regardless of where he or she lives and regardless of where the market for the end product is.

The US has, since the 1990s, outsourced much of its manufacturing base to the developing world. China has been converting a large fraction of its farmland to industrial development. 6.6 percent of its total arable land, which amounts to 8 million hectares. The effects of this are that with less stringent environmental standards, the manufacturing activity is increasingly releasing substances into the environment that compromise Chinese ecosystems, and not just ecosystems in China.[42] At the same time, to fuel industrial growth, China is promoting a mix of energy sources which includes at one end solar and wind power that have relatively benign impacts on the environment. At the other end, however, China's industry continues to rely heavily on fossil fuels including coal, the use of which has dramatically increased along with the economic growth, particularly of lower quality coal. The result of this is yet more agricultural land being taken out of use due to extensive pollution, including the heavy metal pollution associated with burning coal, again especially low-grade coal.[43]

To feed the growing urban population that works in China's growing industries while farmland is taken out of production by land use change and by industrial pollution, China has invested heavily in importing food, particularly from South America. This has resulted in the conversion of forests and grasslands into rangeland for raising cattle[44] and soybean farms,[45] which has had the effect of dramatically raising Brazil's GHG emissions. Soybean farms are being established on the Serrada grassland, degrading what

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[42] Tom Philpott, "Following U.S. Consumerism through the Fields of China and Brazil," *Grist*, April 13, 2007, http://grist.org/article/global2/.
[43] Fayen Wong and Sonali Paul, "China Power Plants Exempt from Ban on Using Low-Quality Coal: Sources," *Reuters*, September 19, 2014, http://www.reuters.com/article/us-china-coal-idUSKBN0HE0TU20140919.
[44] Mercedes M. C. Bustamante et al., "Estimating Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Cattle Raising in Brazil," *Climatic Change* 115, no. 3 (2012): 559–77, doi:10.1007/s10584-012-0443-3.
[45] E. Castanheira and F. Freire, "Life-Cycle Greenhouse Gas Assessment of Soybeans," *Proceedings of LCM*, 2011, 537–545.

the Nature Conservancy refers to 'as the world's most biologically rich savannah,' and displacing the Xavante Wara, an indigenous group.[46]

This is the result of among other things, labour as commodity. With the commodity you need not worry where it came from, it is essentially undifferentiated and fungible. Manufacturing companies make a rational choice as to where they are going to get labour at the best price. And, at a low of a range between 27 and 40 per cent of the cost of US labor, Chinese labour represents a considerable saving.[47] This is paired with minimal labour disruptions – while there has been industrial unrest, the work culture and the state apparatus is serious about keeping work stoppages to a minimum and maintaining a compliant workforce.[48] Thus, many industries have made the rational choice to locate their operations in China.

It could be argued, that these problems would have happened had the manufacturing of products for US and European markets stayed in the US and Europe. That may well be true, and that would also be a problem. The difference is that by offshoring production, the manufacturing companies have further disembedded the goods produced from society in which they circulate. It is yet harder to know the provenance and the social and environmental circumstances surrounding of a commodity manufactured overseas; it is easier to be unaware of the high ecological cost of the cheap goods.

It becomes apparent that these are all variations on the theme identified by Polanyi as *disembedding*. The *disembedding* of the product from the society in which it's sold and used, renders its environmental and social impact invisible. Similarly in the developing world the *disembedding* of the product from the place where it was produced means that the production becomes invisible. They don't use it, they don't

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[46] Tom Philpott, "Following U.S. Consumerism through the Fields of China and Brazil."
[47] Janet Ceglowski and Stephen Golub, "Just How Low Are China's Labour Costs?," *The World Economy* 30, no. 4 (April 2007): 604 - 606.
[48] Javier C. Hernández, "Labor Protests Multiply in China as Economy Slows, Worrying Leaders," *The New York Times*, March 14, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/15/world/asia/china-labor-strike-protest.html.

know where or how it's used. As the social and environmental context of the products' manufacture is invisible to the market, so the cultural and environmental context of the product in its use and final disposal is often invisible to the labourers who were employed in its manufacture.

2.4. Possessing land, dispossessing people

Land's commodity status has led to some serious social and environmental problems. Commodities as we have seen are essentially fungible, and in the property regimes of market societies, there is little democratic or political influence on how an owner uses the land he or she owns. This has very effectively disembedded land from its social, spatial, and environmental function.

Property prices in London UK, are a good example of the social effects of land as a commodity. Land's commodity status means that it is priced using the supply-demand price mechanism. In an international city like London, the high demand for real estate property drives the prices up which then attracts buyers looking to own land as an investment, instead of a residence – to realize profit rather than add to the community. This can have some perverse effects. Land banking is an example of this. A company will buy land and sit on it waiting for it to appreciate in value until such a point that they decide to sell it or develop it to realize profit.[49]

This is a basic betrayal of the social purpose of land, and the consequences are dire. Essentially, the commodity nature of land and its price, governed by the supply demand price mechanism, has resulted in land being taken out of use and in the fragmentation of communities and even families. It has led to situations like the one in Stratford, East London in late 2014 that starkly illustrates the scale and the nature of the social problems engendered by commodified land.

A group of women living temporarily in hostels on social assistance were told that there was no social housing available for them in Stratford, a district of East London which had recently experienced a rapid

[49] Dave Hill, "London Housing Crisis: Tackling Landbanking," *The Guardian*, March 2, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/davehillblog/2014/mar/02/london-housing-crisis-landbanking.

increase in housing prices. They were encouraged to seek social housing elsewhere in the UK in places as far away as Manchester, far from their families and their support networks.[50]

This group of women occupied a row of houses in the borough that were slated for redevelopment but by 2015 they had been vacant for 5 years. This suggests land-banking as well as the privatization of public property. Not only had the houses been left vacant in a city that's experiencing a housing crisis, but residents of the borough fully expect the re-development of the row houses was intended for people in a higher income bracket[51] – not without some justification given the area's proximity to the financial district and its recent development due to the 2013 Olympic summer games. The protesters and many other commentators in the UK refer to the process whereby development favours higher income earners, pushing out lower income earners, as 'social cleansing'.[52]

The problems associated with high property prices are so severe that the UK government started the Key Worker Housing program in the South East of England, including London. If you work in one of the designated sectors, you have access to rental homes but also schemes to help you buy your property. The professions that are deemed essential for an area, but are considered to command too low a salary to be able to comfortably afford accommodation, are not the professions one might expect; included in the list of key worker occupations are nurse, teacher and police officer.[53] When people in these professions cannot afford accommodation, I think it suggests that commodification of land and housing is a problem. And, while it is good that society has stepped in to address the problems of treating land

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[50] Fran Singh, "Young Mothers Have Occupied Some Empty London Flats to Protest Homelessness | VICE | Canada," *VICE*, accessed May 22, 2016, http://www.vice.com/en_ca/read/some-young-mothers-have-occupied-some-flats-to-protest-homelessness-912.

[51] Sarah Kwei, "Focus E15 Mums Have Fought for the Right to a Home. This Is Only the Start | Sarah Kwei," *The Guardian*, October 4, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/05/focus-e15-mums-fight-for-right-to-home.

[52] Matthew Taylor, "'Vast Social Cleansing' Pushes Tens of Thousands of Families out of London," *The Guardian*, August 28, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/aug/28/vast-social-cleansing-pushes-tens-of-thousands-of-families-out-of-london.

[53] "Employment Income Manual," *GOV.UK*, accessed May 24, 2016, https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/employment-income-manual/eim21735.

and accommodation as a commodity, it doesn't go anywhere near solving the problem and it helps very few low-income earners.

In the South West of England, there is a similar problem. Cornwall is the poorest area in the UK, with an average wage of £14,300 a year, in contrast to the national average of £23,000 a year.[54] Yet, it has been a very popular destination for holiday homes. The effects of this are that St. Ives becomes deserted in the off season months, but due to the demand for housing -- boosting prices -- local residents are priced out of their own community with the average price of a home £210,000. The residents understand the mechanism by which they are being priced out of their own community and in a referendum held by St. Ives Town council the citizens overwhelmingly voted in favour of rejecting new accommodation builds unless they were earmarked for local residents.[55]

A developer has launched a legal challenge to the referendum result. All planning decisions are open to challenges and the developer has legal grounds to challenge the referendum. While the legal challenge has not been concluded at the time of writing, that it was launched underlines the importance placed on the cultural concept of property. It is the sovereign domain of the property owner, and anyone may buy anything if he or she has sufficient funds. This view of property may allow a single property developer to trump the democratic will of the people of St Ives.

These examples illustrate the problems of land as a commodity. Those with means may own land wherever they may choose. Property makes very few demands of the property owner with regards to the local community. As we can see from the two examples, land lies idle and unoccupied, either waiting

[54] Dave CDM, "Cornwall Is Officially the Poorest Area in the UK," *West Briton*, May 6, 2014, http://www.westbriton.co.uk/Cornwall-officially-poorest-area-UK/story-21062714-detail/story.html.
[55] "St Ives Referendum: Second Homes Ban Backed by Voters," *BBC News*, accessed May 22, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-cornwall-36204795.

for their owners to use them during the summer months, or simply waiting for land prices to go up. This fragments communities, and can exacerbate inflated property prices.

Land as commodity also precipitates negative effects on the environment through increased commuting. While there are many jobs to be had in a large city, the increased property prices are a strong incentive to live outside of the city and commute in. In the case of London we have a daytime population of over ten million which goes down to just over eight and a half million at night. Almost one and a half million people are travelling into London. This includes commuters, people on business, and tourists.[56] Similarly, commuting within London is high. The daytime population of the London Borough of Camden almost doubles, while that of Westminster almost triples, and London's primary financial district sees the population jump by 56 times.[57]

Commuters are also travelling for longer. The amount of time spent commuting in the UK overall has increased dramatically over the past decade, with the number of people making a commute of two hours increasing by 72% since 2004.[58] In Britain, GHG emissions from transportation is the one sector that is higher than in 1990. For personal vehicles, emissions have risen from 59 million tonnes of CO_2 in 1990 to 63 million tonnes in 2002. The story is much the same across Europe and North America.[59]

GHG emissions are not the only environmental effect of commuting. There is also runoff from roads. Rains wash over the roads, flushing, unburnt fuel and particulate matter including heavy metals from the wear on car parts and road asphalt. This goes into ditches where it can affects plants and

[56] "Daytime Population of London 2014 – London Datastore," accessed May 22, 2016, http://data.london.gov.uk/apps/daytime-population-of-london-2014/.
[57] Peter Spence, "City Sees a 56 Fold Increase in Population during the Working Day," October 31, 2013, http://www.cityam.com/blog/1383213232/city-sees-56-fold-increase-population-during-working-day.
[58] "Commuting: Rise of 72% in Journeys over Two Hours a Day," *BBC News*, accessed May 22, 2016, http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-34765142.
[59] James Woodcock et al., "Energy and Health 3–energy and Transport," *Lancet* 370, no. 9592 (2007): 1078–1088.

ecosystems near to the road. From there, it can find its way into aquifers and groundwater and contaminate them, and it can end up in water courses, where it can disrupt water ecosystems.[60]

Commuting also requires road networks the building of which results in reduced carbon sequestration capabilities through removal of vegetation. GHGs are released into the atmosphere through degradation of soils. New roads fragment wildlife habitat and pose a formidable barrier to, and source of mortality of, wildlife. Furthermore, edge effects of habitat are increased. Both species density and species richness decrease closer to the road. The ecological effects of the noise and open space of a road, are more serious even than roadkill causing precipitous declines in some species.[61]

Granted, not all of the traffic, and not all of the increase in traffic since the 1990s has been commuter traffic, but the fact remains that increases in accommodation costs have serious negative effects. They attract investors who want to buy the land or accommodation as an investment rather than a home, and it deters some residents, and excludes others preventing them from living near where they work. The knock on effect is fractured communities and families, and fractured and polluted habitat, more GHG emissions and reduced capacity to sequester carbon.

2.5. Owning land for forestry

Forestry is another arena in which the commodity status of land quite clearly contributes to environmental degradation. Forestry products companies may not outright own crown land, but provincial governments can grant different bundles of forestry rights to companies wishing to harvest timber from crown land, including transferable rights, where the company can further sell their rights to

[60] Richard TT Forman and Lauren E. Alexander, "Roads and Their Major Ecological Effects," *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 1998, 219-20.

[61] Ibid.

a different company. The difference between transferable rights and owning the land outright is minimal. The important thing to bear in mind is that the land is a commodity. The land has been 'produced' as in defined as a parcel with rights of access and exploitation, and has been sold to the forestry company which then uses this commodity to make money.

Clear cutting represents the most cost-effective way to harvest timber, and there are very few restrictions on the timber companies. Each Canadian provincial government sets a spatial limit on clear-cutting – Ontario's limit is 260 hectares and Quebec's is 100 hectares.[62] Loopholes in the forestry regulations allow forestry companies to defy this limit.[63]

Clear-cutting has been justified as a timber harvesting technique that resembles natural disturbances such as fires or floods that kill large areas of forest.[64] The crucial difference, however, between clear-cutting and disturbance by these natural phenomena is that with harvesting by clear cut, all the trees are removed. Dead and fallen trees, play a vital role in the reproduction of forests and in the regeneration of disturbed forests. They are nurseries that protect growing saplings, fertilize the soil.[65] Furthermore, Canada authorizes the cut of ecologically rich, ecologically sensitive old growth forests. This puts unique species and ecosystems at risk, and although Canadian forests are minimally harvested in comparison to their total acreage, the number of species at risk in Canada has grown from 17 in 1978 to 467 in 2004.[66]

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[62] The Conference Board of Canada, "Use of Forest Resources," *How Canada Performs*, accessed May 23, 2016, http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/environment/use-of-forest-resources.aspx.
[63] "Clear-Cutting in Ontario," *Earthroots*, accessed July 24, 2016, http://earthroots.org/index.php/clearcutting-item.
[64] The Conference Board of Canada, "Use of Forest Resources."
[65] Gillian McEachern and Tim Gray, "Lessons for Canadians from Swedish Forests" (Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society), accessed May 23, 2016, http://wildlandsleague.org/attachments/Lessons%20for%20Canadians%20from%20Swedish%20Forests%20FS7.pdf.
[66] Thomas I. Gunton et al., *The Maple Leaf in the OECD: Comparing Progress toward Sustainability* (David Suzuki Foundation Burnaby, 2005).

The impact of commodified crown land and of Canadian forestry is emphasized in contrast to land owned but managed according to different principles. The Pluto Darkwoods in BC had been the property of the German Duke von Württemberg who brought a different philosophy of relating to the land from Germany. It is also tempting to see a role played by the privilege of great wealth and especially aristocracy historically were not always allied to the market system and occasionally opposed to it. The Duke asked a great deal of money for the land - $100 million - but was eager to find a buyer who would maintain the land in a fashion similar to how he had managed it. In the Duke's ownership, while timber was harvested from the land, it was done so at a rate roughly 30% lower than many Canadian forestry operations.[67] The Duke had decided from the outset to conduct forestry operations in a sustainable manner in such a way as to minimize their impact on the ecological character of the forest. Riparian zones were respected in ways that they were not by other land owners or users. Sensitive riparian zones flourished as do bull trout which, along with many fish species, is threatened in the province. Grizzly bears also thrive in the Darkwoods, which are also critical habitat for the mountain caribou. This is among North America's most critically endangered species.

The treatment of the forest and animal communities on this land are an exception that highlights a general rule of the commodification of land, particularly as it is contrasted with standard forestry practice and indeed extractive processes. The first priority considered in standard use is the maximization of the profit of the owner, this makes it very hard for society to practice responsible stewardship of the land, and has resulted in a precipitous decline in the health of animal and plant communities.

[67] Bruce Kirby, "Conserving the Darkwoods in British Columbia (Page 4)," *Canadian Geographic*, accessed May 24, 2016, http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/magazine/jf11/conserving_darkwoods4.asp.

2.6. The commodity purifies

Karl Polanyi defined the commodity as something created for sale on the market in order to realize a profit. He said that the complete commodification of land and labour would lead to the annihilation of both. The mechanism by which this happens is through the simplification of social relationships of society towards land and labour. Guy Robinson, writing about labour as a commodity - though it could equally refer to land as commodity (or indeed any commodity) - refers to this as a 'purification' of the relationship between employer and employee. The relationship is one that consists only of work coming from the employee and wages coming from the employer.[68] This stripped down relationship disembeds the work - and also the firm - from the society on which it depends. The work is the only thing that is important for the firm - it can therefore come from any labourer. And, as it is a commodity, it is incumbent upon the firm to find the best labour at the cheapest cost, which is why companies and corporations exploit labour markets in countries with lower labour costs. Hence the proliferation of call-centres in countries very far, both in distance and in culture, from the country whose consumers they serve.

Commodification works the other way around too. Not only is the firm looking at labour as a commodity to exploit in order to realize a profit, but the labourer is also looking at his or her labour as a commodity to put on the market to receive the best price. In essence the labourer has abstracted the labour from its social and environmental context. It is psychologically, and financially, difficult for the labourer to refuse to work on the grounds that the labourer's work – the firm's concern – is damaging to the environment.

[68] Guy Robinson, "Labour as Commodity," *Philosophy* 71, no. 275 (1996): 129.

Labour as commodity is coercive, in that citizens have no choice. They must work for a living. It is also co-optative. The decisions one must take in participating in the labour market encourage a tacit agreement with the general principles of the labour market, and the specific conditions of the position and sector the labourer finds him- or herself in.

The relationship between society and land is similarly purified. Land as a commodity need only contribute to profit for the firm which possesses it. It is as if the commodity designation of land urges the firm not to overlook or minimize the environmental context of the land it owns. Consequently, as was discussed in the urban context in England, land as property has developed a tangential relationship to the need for shelter and other social and environmental uses.

A healthy society and a healthy ecosystem requires that human society recognize and respect the social and environmental context of the land its activities affect and that requires changing the commodity status of both labour and land.

2. Decommodify!

Given that the commodification of labour and of land gives rise to many negative consequences for society and for the natural environment, it is important to look at examples where labour and land is not commodified, and examples where it has been partially de-commodified to see whether this mitigates or eliminates the negative consequences of commodification. In looking at non-commodified societies, we can see how labour, services, and products are intertwined within the social relations of that particular society. In examples of de-commodified labour within commodified societies, we find people working not for maximum personal gain as would be predicted by classical and neo-classical economic theory. Instead, a variety of motivations for work are stated including, a desire to put one's skills to use, an affinity with the organization, and a desire to see that organization's goals met. Workers' motivation becomes based on the nature of their labour rather than on financial gain. The goal of the work is emphasized, and in some cases that goal is a strengthening of social relationships within a community. De-commodified labour also challenges the idea that the conventional top-down hierarchical organization of work is the only, or best way to organize work. This has interesting and exciting implications for the opportunities for greater workplace democracy. Additionally, with efforts to de-commodify land, we see land that has multiple social uses while simultaneously being a site for increased biodiversity. Non-commodified and de-commodified land and labour can have positive environmental and social implications.

2.1. Non-commodified Labour.

When we look at traditionally non-commodified societies, we can see actions that at first glance may seem a little like the commodified exchange as it happens in commodified societies. For example, the Ju/'hoansi of the Kalahari frequently trade arrows with each other. When a hunter makes a kill, custom dictates that that hunter give a portion of the meat to the maker of the arrow that killed the animal. This looks a little like exchange: payment for the arrow with the labour of hunting food, or paying for food with an arrow.

When we look at the definition of 'commodity', however, we see something that is made with purpose of selling it on markets for profit, but the Ju/'hoansi exchange their arrows for other hunters' arrows, and it is not used to realize profit but rather to distribute food.

Giving away food has been recorded in other societies. The Ache hunter gives as much as 70% of his kill to the rest of the community, while the Gunwiggu of Australia give all of their kill to the older men who then distribute it to the rest of the community. They then divide it up and distribute it to the community. Generosity is highly prized in many non-commodified cultures and quite vigorously taught, enforced and reinforced among members from a very early age.[69]

And in fact, members of certain non-commodified cultures will share to their seeming detriment. The anthropologist Eleanor Leacock records a Mistassini Cree, with whom she worked, sharing food he had taken on a hunting expedition. The consequence of this was that the expedition would probably have to be shortened, and he would go without the opportunity of gaining valuable furs. She asked him why he had shared what little food he had. His response surprised Leacock: "suppose now, not give them flour,

[69] Robert L. Kelly, *The Lifeways of Hunter-Gatherers: The Foraging Spectrum* (Cambridge University Press, 2013). 139

lard – just dead inside." His expression of irritation was something Leacock had not witnessed often, but she was most surprised by the suggestion that it was utterly inhumane to countenance *not* giving away the food.[70] This suggests a deeply held value rather than the use of generosity as a self-serving strategy.

Anthropologists have, however, attempted to explain the motivation for this generosity with the assumption that they *must* make some personal gain from giving away the results of their hard work over and above what they would gain from keeping a hold of it. In the case of the hunter gatherers who give away a significant portion of the meat from their kill, it was proposed that they did so with the expectation that they would be able to rely on the generosity of their group members in the future should they need to in such a case as their hunting was unsuccessful.

It turns out, however, that good hunters are seldom in need of having their generosity reciprocated. As good hunters, they tend to experience more success in hunting than poorer hunters, and thus consistently give away a significant portion of the meat of their kills seemingly without recompense. Some suggestions, which have some support from research, are that the skilful generous hunter benefits from extra-marital affairs and also that he benefits from childcare, again suggesting a more or less equal exchange of goods (meat) for services (sex and/or childcare) that is superficially reminiscent of the way a commodity society functions.

I would be tempted to see the economistic fallacy at play with these suggestions, that these explanations for apparent generosity are based on the assumption that the norms of the market economy prevail across culture. In contrast, the giving away of meat could be motivated not by the rational urge, or not only by the rational urge, of the hunter to get the greatest reward out of his fellows. Indeed, the childcare that the successful hunter gets, need not be explained purely as recompense for food given regularly, but as an understanding that each member is part of a society as

[70] Ibid. 137

well as an individual hunter, gatherer or childminder. Indeed, Polanyi was struck by the same notion on reading Malinowski and Thurnwald: he saw the behaviour of the hunter gatherer not as directed toward individual gain, but towards cultural and social aims – preserving a coherent community.[71]

Indeed, while there has been much research interest in the 'selfish gene', it turns out that while individualistic self-serving behaviour has evolutionary benefits at the individual level, altruism has benefits at the group level. Human, or indeed any social animals, have a dual character. They are both selfish *and* altruistic.[72] The classical and neo-classical economists' designation of the human as the self-interested *homo oeconomicus* acknowledges one very important facet of the human, but entirely at the expense of the other equally important facet, that of fellow-feeling, altruism, care of and concern for the other members of our group.

So, while the successful hunter has an obvious material interest in his own well-being, from an evolutionary point of view, the hunter also has an interest in the well-being of the society in which he lives, and thus the well-being of the individual members of that society beyond what they can specifically do for him, and he has to balance this with his material needs and desires. In other words, it is entirely possible that the individual members of the community contribute to the kind of community in which they would like to live, one in which those who are less fortunate are provided for. They do not want to be, in the words of the Thomas the Mistassini Cree, 'dead inside.'

3.2. Time Banking

Time banking is a form of de-commodified labour that at first glance seems to be just an alternate form of commodified labour. The worker, instead of cash for labour, receives time credits to the value of the

[71] Gareth Dale, "Karl Polanyi's the Great Transformation: Perverse Effects, Protectionism and Gemeinschaft," Economy and Society 37, no. 4 (2008): 495–524.
[72] David Bollier, *Think like a Commoner: A Short Introduction to the Life of the Commons* (Gabriola Island, BC : New Society Publishers, 2014). 82-3

time spent working. Say that worker spent four hours working, he or she would receive four time credits that could be used to pay for four hours work from another worker or workers. As such it looks precisely like money, and the worker receives a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

The main difference that makes it non-commodified labour is that there is one crucial element missing from this arrangement that would make it commodified and that is the element of profit. No one at present is extracting profit from time-banking schemes. The aim of the capitalist market system has been described as 'the endless accumulation of still more capital'.[73]

While a time credit resembles cash, the stated aim of timebanks contrasts starkly with the aims of the capitalist market system. It is not to extract profit from the work done and not to accumulate surplus, but to create strong communities characterized by reciprocity and durable social networks. And, this is done by developing 'co-production' and term coined to describe relationships built on reciprocity, equality, compassion, and the free sharing of knowledge, skills, time. As such, time-banking emphasizes use-values – the individual services that are performed in the time-banking scheme, but also in the overarching aim of creating a strong resilient community through co-production.[74] Here the aim focuses on use-value rather than on exchange value, and particularly the accumulation of exchange value.

Indeed the removal of money from the exchanges of services alone could be enough to improve participants sense of satisfaction with the work they carry out and the quality of the work they perform. Dan Ariely, in *Predictably Irrational*, outlines how the introduction of money in a transaction of goods and services, even the introduction of the concept of money, causes the participants to think in terms of market norms. While someone may be willing to do something for free as a favour, when money is

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[73] Jernej Prodnik, "A Note on the Ongoing Processes of Commodification: From the Audience Commodity to the Social Factory," *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Critique. Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society* 10, no. 2 (2012): 278.

[74] Josh Ryan-Collins et al., *The New Wealth of Time: How Timebanking Helps People Build Better Public Services* (new economics foundation, 2008).

introduced, they suddenly switch frames, and start to evaluate whether or not their time and effort was worth the money. He gives the example of lawyers who wouldn't give their services to needy retirees for $30 an hour. Using market norms, they evaluated their time and labour to be worth much more. When asked if, instead of charging a reduced rate, they would help them for free, social norms kicked in and they agreed. [75]

Indeed, the offer of cash for work, even the idea of cash, elicits from the individual not only market norms but a specific set of behaviours that are associated with market norms. In experiments, participants who had to solve a puzzle that mentioned salary, differed from the other experimental group whose puzzle did not mention money in that they were more anti-social – they sat farther from other participants, offered help less often, and selected individual-based tasks rather than teamwork tasks.[76]

The timebank's time credits, despite resembling cash in many respects, seem to occupy a conceptual space that is more like a reciprocation of favours than market transactions; they elicit the social norms rather than market norms, even though they superficially resemble cash. As such, timebanking has been found to produce beneficial results. Studies have shown that as well as increased well-being, some participants experience improved physical health.[77] Participants state that they experience an increased sense of community where they live, that they know their neighbours and other members of their community, that they can trust others, don't feel so isolated and they feel safer in their community.[78]

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[75] Dan Ariely, *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions*, 1st Harper Perennial ed. (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010). 71
[76] Ibid. 75
[77] Judith Lasker et al., "Time Banking and Health: The Role of a Community Currency Organization in Enhancing Well-Being," Health Promotion Practice 12, no. 1 (2011): 111–113.
[78] Ibid. 9, 10

Along with the social benefits there might also be some environmental benefits. Seyfang, in his research on timebanks[79] points out that this is a question for further research, but he makes a compelling point that much consumption finds its impetus in unmet psychological, non-material needs. Consumption is often an attempt to boost a person's spirits and self-esteem as the common colloquialism 'retail therapy' suggests.

Consumption is also an attempt at self-expression with the aim to connect to others – this is the thesis of the book The Story of Goods, that goods are a communication system, and much consumption is about participating in society.[80] The increased sense of well-being and community spirit that arises from a successful time-bank program could answer a lot of the psychological needs that would otherwise lead to recreational consumption. Thusly, it could have a further effect of leading to positive environmental outcomes through decreased material consumption.

3.3. Skilled work for Free: Wikipedia, Linux

There are examples of skilled labour that the conventional labour market usually values at a relatively high price that's done without the conventional recompense of a wage, salary or invoice. Prominent examples of this can be found in sectors that rely on the internet: the operating system Linux, the browser Firefox, and the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia.

The creators of Wikipedia did not initially intend to create an encyclopaedia written by unaccredited volunteers. They created Wikipedia as a springboard for a free internet encyclopaedia called Nupedia which was to be along the lines of conventional encyclopaedias. It had the standard operating apparatus

[79] Seyfang, "Low-Carbon Currencies." 9

[80] Mary Douglas, The World of Goods: Towards an Anthropology of Consumption, vol. 6 (Psychology Press, 2002), https://books-google-ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=goBCb-RGfU4C&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=the+world+of+goods&ots=g-p_pOuwP1&sig=GXEp0zA6xXTYGvLDL-YGThwLVMQ.

of the print encyclopaedias of the last century: advisory boards to suggest what the entries should be, editors to check and approve entries that were written by selected recognized experts in the field about which they wrote.

Nupedia didn't take off. Wikipedia the encyclopaedia to which anyone, accredited or otherwise, could write and edit entries – had become very popular. The owners made the decision to drop Nupedia and focus on Wikipedia. They decided to focus their attention on an encyclopaedia written by unpaid, unorganized, non-expert members of the public and make it their main project.[81]

Wikipedia now has a staggering 38 million articles across the more than 250 languages that Wikipedia serves.[82] It is the world's most popular informational website with around 15 billion page views per month.[83] It has 24 million people registered as unpaid contributors, twelve thousand of which regularly contribute. It is often the first port of call for people trying to find out something about pretty much anything. Even journalists make use of Wikipedia in researching their stories. This despite the persistent view of the low quality and lack of reliability of the online encyclopaedia. Much of the perception of the unreliability is down to prejudices around lay members of the public working for free. The idea that only cash gives value to an occupation suggests itself in this case, especially seeing as independent reviews of Wikipedia have determined that the quality, of at least the science articles, is close to or equal to that of Britannica.[84]

The success of Wikipedia is compelling and counter-intuitive, at least for a member of a market society. The very large dispersed group of unpaid contributors managed to develop complex and effective

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[81] "The Decline of Wikipedia," *MIT Technology Review*, accessed May 28, 2016, https://www.technologyreview.com/s/520446/the-decline-of-wikipedia/.
[82] Sarah Guminski, "What Makes Wikipedia's Volunteer Editors Volunteer?," Scientific American Blog Network, accessed May 28, 2016, http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/what-makes-wikipedia-s-volunteer-editors-volunteer/.
[83] Adrienne LaFrance, "The Internet's Favorite Website," The Atlantic, May 11, 2016, http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2016/05/people-love-wikipedia/482268/.
[84] Donna Shaw, "Wikipedia in the Newsroom," American Journalism Review 30, no. 1 (2008): 42–44.

workflows and procedures for producing and maintaining Wikipedia entries. The maintenance involved systems of monitoring content, detecting vandalism (that is jumped upon with seeming glee by the press[85]) and dealing with it quickly, and for banning such users who commit vandalism and otherwise violate the principles of Wikipedia. While Wikipedia now has paid staff dedicated to its maintenance, quality control, and prevention of vandalism, it gained much of its success without the traditional top-down, leader-driven, pyramidal power structure that normally characterizes the creation of such a complex thing, and without the paid labour that is normally associated with such a big project.

Paul Mason inverts the old saw of mainstream economics teaching: "imagine the USSR trying create its own Starbucks", and asks us to imagine Wikipedia being created by a conventional capitalist firm. Employing 12,000 people to create 38 million articles would be nigh on impossible. In any case, if it did manage to do so, it would be competing with Wikipedia which is doing the same thing for free – a non-profit, with very very low staff overheads.[86]

The computer operating system Linux provides a similar story to that of Wikipedia. Its founder, Linus Torvalds, in the early 90s advertised that he was creating an operating system, and people all over the world responded by writing bits of code for this new operating system. While software companies normally guard the code for their programs jealously, going to extraordinary lengths to keep it secret so that other companies and private individuals would not be able to use it, Torvalds made Linux open source, choosing the General Public License or GPL. This meant that anyone was allowed to view the source code that made the program run. This licensing was chosen to allow users to use the program for

[85] Eric Randall, "How a Raccoon Became an Aardvark," *The New Yorker*, May 19, 2014, http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/how-a-raccoon-became-an-aardvark.
[86] Paul Mason, *Postcapitalism: A Guide to Our Future* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016). 39

any purpose. Users could also view and change the program to meet their needs, and had the freedom to share the program with anyone they chose including the changes they had made to the program.[87]

An international community of programmers formed, all donating their time and code for free. Similar to Wikipedia, Linus did not use a traditional top down management method to co-ordinate this multitude of ideas, wills and skills. It would not have worked anyway, as he had no mechanism by which to cajole them into doing what he wanted them to do seeing as he wasn't paying them, and he had no way to threaten them seeing as he had effectively relinquished control over the project with the GPL licensing. Despite this, a stable and coherent code emerged from the disparate team of programmers. The way Torvalds facilitated this was not by dictating the shape that the program should take, telling them what and how they should program, but by showing them what they had programmed. He would regularly publish the program with the new developments so the programmers could see how it worked.[88]

Linux is now running software on machines in 75% of stock exchanges and runs large parts of the websites Facebook, Google, Twitter, and Ebay.[89] So it has effectively been privatized, at least in part.

There are however, two important things to note with how the Linux operating system was created. First, like Wikipedia, it defied the traditional top-down management process where a small number of people controlled the final product. There was no clear leader, yet a dispersed team of a great number of programmers working from all over the world managed to create not only a working product, but an incredibly successful one. Secondly, it was created by some eight hundred contributors, all donating

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[87] "The Story of Linux: Commemorating 20 Years of the Linux Operating System," *Amara*, accessed May 27, 2016, http://www.amara.org/en/videos/e3CA7nIbxxlP/info/the-story-of-linux-commemorating-20-years-of-the-linux-operating-system/.

[88] Rod Bantjes, *Social Movements in a Global Context: Canadian Perspectives* (Canadian Scholars' Press, 2007). 181 - 184

[89] "The Story of Linux."

their time and their code for free, which as in the case of Wikipedia, is a far larger workforce than almost any software company can afford.

So why do they do it? Why do knowledgeable, intelligent and technologically skilled-informed people donate their time and energy, and valuable skills, to a project for which they are not receiving and tangible recompense in the form of wages, or even in-kind payment? A user survey at Wikipedia gives us the motivation by the contributors there. 71 per cent simply enjoyed the idea of working for free. This is an overwhelming rejection of the position of the earliest economists that work is unpleasant and that a rational human would only take it on for the highest amount of recompense he or she could get. For 63 per cent of the respondents, contributing to Wikipedia was based on an ideological or philosophical motivation. They believed that information *should* be free.[90]

The case of Linux shows us similar motivations for working for free. Programmers don't look at what they do as distasteful and burdensome work. On the contrary, in programming they find they can immerse themselves in a challenging intellectual exercise. In terms of their product being freely available for others to use, programmers look at themselves as scientists. The pursuit of science really only works if scientists share their discoveries and insights freely, and the culture suggests that individual scientists shouldn't profit from the hoarding of individual bits of knowledge – they are supposed to publish and share. Similarly, programmers believe that they have a responsibility to make their 'discoveries' available to other programmers and easily accessible for the public.[91]

Wikipedia contributors and Linux programmers could also be working for bragging rights. There could well be an element of prestige to be had from contributing a part of the operating system on such a widely used operating system as Linux. And, having contributed to early Wikipedia would be a

[90] Mason, *Postcapitalism*. 128
[91] Bantjes, *Social Movements in a Global Context*.

noteworthy accomplishment. Adding a new page now to a website with over 38 million articles would be an astonishing accomplishment.

On the other hand, as has been mentioned Linux has partially been appropriated by profit making firms. Wikipedia also, with a declining number of contributors has been dealing with contributors who employed by companies to write positive Wikipedia articles about them. Basically, companies are using Wikipedia as PR.[92] The fact that both of these projects started, grew, and became dominant within a market based capitalist system is surprising and testament to the value of non-commodified labour.

At first glance it would not appear that this method of organizing a project without the use of paid labour really represents much of a reduction in environmental impact over the same products produced with paid labour. Commuting has been cut down on, and the environmental footprint of workplace premises has been eliminated from the equation, as has business trips of executives. These are respectable, but in comparison to certain industries such as mining, forestry and air transport, it becomes apparent that their value lies in the alternative model that they put forward that works perfectly well even in a commodified market society, in fact better than profit making enterprises with a paid workforce would.

3.4. Volunteering

Volunteering is a very clear example of non-commodified work that is fairly common in modern market society. In Canada over 12 million people volunteered almost 2 billion hours of their time in 2013. This

[92] Thomas Hallick, "Wikipedia And Paid Edits: Companies Pay Top Dollar To Firms Willing To 'Fix' Their Entries," *International Business Times*, November 8, 2013, http://www.ibtimes.com/wikipedia-paid-edits-companies-pay-top-dollar-firms-willing-fix-their-entries-1449172.

works out to be 44% of the population working for free.[93] In the first decade of the new millenium the contribution to the economy represented by the non-profit and volunteering organizations - for which volunteers' work forms a significant component - was estimated at $80.3 billion, a full 4 per cent of Canada's GDP.[94] This is a greater contribution to the Canadian economy than some estimates of Alberta's Oil production at 2% of GDP.[95]

The National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating taken in 2000 gives us a valuable insight into the varying motivations Canadians have for volunteering. While gaining experience and skills to help the volunteer pursue waged work was a common motivation at 62%. The most common motivation for volunteering, stated by 95% of respondents, was that the organization supported a cause in which the volunteer believed. The next most common reason stated, however, mentioned by 81% of volunteers, was that they had skills and experience that they wanted to use.

These two most common reasons for volunteering are very interesting as they suggest an interest in doing work that covers work's major aspects from opposite ends. Sympathy with the organization's values suggests a wish to see the organization's goals met, and a desire to work in order to make that happen. The second most commonly stated motivation for volunteering, the desire to use one's skills, abilities, and experience is an intrinsic motivation to do the work - an appreciation of, if not a joy in, performing the assigned tasks. Basically the great majority of volunteers are working because they want to see the final outcome of their work, and they are working because they enjoy doing the work. This directly contradicts the early economists who characterized work as a disutility.

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[93] Statistics Canada Government of Canada, "Volunteering and Charitable Giving in Canada," January 30, 2015, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2015001-eng.htm.
[94] Jack Quarter, Ann Armstrong, and Laurie Mook, *Understanding the Social Economy: A Canadian Perspective* (University of Toronto Press, 2009), ix https://books-google-ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=QGbaI3ilv2sC&oi=fnd&pg=PR8&dq=understanding+the+social+economy&ots=vAqKjBcs7F&sig=C-s8tndl75YWicZVtolN96cUNq0.
[95] Lusine Lusinyan et al., *Canada: Selected Issues*, IMF Country Report ; No. 14/28 (Washington, D.C. : International Monetary Fund, 2014) 12, 12 http://www.library.yorku.ca/e/resolver/id/2576871.

This suggests an embedding of the volunteer work into society that throws the disembedding of much waged work in stark relief. That volunteer work is embedded in society is supported by the other reasons given for seeking volunteer positions. 69% of respondents were personally affected by the cause, which further underscores the importance to the volunteer of seeing the organization's aims met. 30% volunteered because their friends were volunteering. This adds a social dimension to the work and the workplace of the volunteer. 26% of volunteers did so in order to fulfill religious obligations.[96] The work is embedded into society through its spiritual significance and meaning to the volunteer and his or her religious community.

3.5. Some thoughts on labour and motivation

These examples illustrate a very clear and very strong motivations for work other than monetary recompense that directly contradict the classical and neo-classical assumption that work is a disutility to be undertaken for the greatest possible gain. And as Ariely shows, monetary recompense can even be a drawback on the performance of the person working. And when that labour is owned and directed by profit making firms, some positive social and environmental outcomes can occur –medical, childcare, and environmental remediation services can serve as examples. Undesirable social and environmental outcomes can and do also occur – the fossil fuel operations mentioned above can serve as examples The commodity status of labour is problematic one. In order to pursue desirable social and environmental outcomes, it is necessary to look at ways in which labour can be decommodified to facilitate healthy societies with a healthy relationship to the natural environment.

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[96] Norah McClintock, *Understanding Canadian Volunteers: Using the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating to Build Your Volunteer Program* (Canadian Centre for Philanthropy= Centre canadien de philanthropie, 2004).4

3.6. Land De-commodified.

The urban community gardens of New York are a phenomenon which city officials have had an inconsistent relationship, and they have long been contested space. They were started in the 70s when New York City was close to bankruptcy. The city took back many properties where the owners had not paid taxes, and sometimes the structures were demolished or dismantled, but the sites were left vacant and often in disarray. Residents cleaned out the spaces, to deal with the unsightliness and the social problems that vacant land inevitably contributed to. They built structures, planted gardens and grew food in these vacant lots. They became community focal points and have been celebrated and encouraged off and on by the city. Officials have referred to New York, with the community gardens in mind, as “the Garden City”, and the informal nature of the land occupation has in many cases been legitimized through contract.

The city, however, had a complicated relationship with the gardens. Despite having previously extended support to the communities caring for the gardens, Mayor Rudolf Giuliani wanted to withdraw this support and develop the sites the gardens occupied.

In terms of the use value, the community gardens provided valuable and much needed green space to a community that was in desperate need of open green spaces, given New York having an average of 1.5 acres per 1000 people which falls far short of the minimum 2.5 acres of open space per 1000 people according to Nemore’s report to the State Senate, *Rooted in community: Community gardens in New*

York City.[97] The green spaces also provided residents with food. One garden still operating in 2015 was producing food in impressive quantities and variety: 90 pounds of honey, cherries, apples, peaches, plum, eggplant okra and chard.[98] The gardens also produce food that is culturally important and that is sometimes expensive at supermarkets.

The gardens presented a venue for residents to meet and socialize. Some gardens would have talks, classes, concerts and exhibitions. This then illustrates another use of the space for learning. Residents learn to garden on these sites, and in so doing as a community can learn about other foods not familiar to them from their own culture, but they can also often benefit from valuable social services. Mexicans with poor English skills would spend a lot of time gardening in the community gardens and would meet up with older residents who would help them by translating their bills, and translating other official correspondence.[99]

The social value of the community gardens was well known and understood. The residents understood that the community garden led to a safer neighbourhood. One resident suggested that because of the beauty of the garden there were more eyes out on the street. The residents were looking out for one another. The benefits of the gardens in this respect were in fact known to more establishment figures. Judges have been known to sentence juvenile offenders to spend time working in their local community garden rather than pay fines.[100]

The community gardens also had high environmental value. They are a very important source of biodiversity within a big, busy and built up city with the low proportion of green space that New York

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[97] Nemore qtd in Karen Schmelzkopf, "Incommensurability, Land Use, and the Right to Space: Community Gardens in New York City1," *Urban Geography* 23, no. 4 (2002): 323–343. 333

[98] Michael Tortorello, "In Community Gardens, a New Weed?," *The New York Times*, February 11, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/12/garden/in-community-gardens-a-new-weed.html.

[99] Efrat Eizenberg, "Actually Existing Commons: Three Moments of Space of Community Gardens in New York City," *Antipode* 44, no. 3 (2012): 774.

[100] Schmelzkopf, "Incommensurability, Land Use, and the Right to Space." 332

has. They typically showed a greater biodiversity than parks or private gardens with between 50 and 180 plant species in an areas less than 1000 square metres, and a great diversity of species of wild bees, even the species *Coelioxys porterage* which had never previously been documented within the city of New York.[101]

This shows the gardens' very high value to the natural environment, and also its obverse, the negative environmental effect of commodified land. De-commodified land in the form of the New York Community gardens present very real and valuable conservation opportunities. They also represent an opportunity for ecological literacy, and plants that favour native pollinator species are increasingly being recommended to associations that tend to community gardens.[102]

The ecological value of the gardens coupled with the residents' opportunity for ecological literacy point to a further benefit of the community gardens, and what could be a striking feature of de-commodified land. They have a multi-layered use value. They provide food, a place to socialize and to learn, to build community, to rehabilitate young offenders, to provide habitat for species, and to provide an opportunity to learn about biodiversity.

The mayor at the time, Rudolph Giuliani, decided to withdraw the city's support of the gardens and to develop the sites the gardens occupied so that the city could realize the financial value that the sites represented. One of the officials said of the gardens and the proposal to develop the sites that "these properties should go to some useful purpose, rather than lying fallow."[103] There then arose a protracted

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[101] Erik Kiviat and Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Biodiversity Assessment Handbook for New York City," 2013, 110 http://www.amnh.org/our-research/center-for-biodiversity-conservation/publications/general-interest/biodiversity-guides/biodiversity-assessment-handbook-for-new-york-city/.
[102] Kevin C. Matteson, John S. Ascher, and Gail A. Langellotto, "Bee Richness and Abundance in New York City Urban Gardens," *Annals of the Entomological Society of America* 101, no. 1 (2008): 140–150.
[103] David Bollier, *Silent Theft: The Private Plunder of Our Common Wealth* (New York: Routledge, 2002).17

dispute between the city on one hand and the residents and other supporters of the community gardens on the other.[104]

On the face of it, the Mayoral office's position makes some sense, but along with the social and ecological value that the gardens offered, they also did contribute financially albeit indirectly. The greenspace along with the improved sense of community raised the cash value of the surrounding properties, thus raising the property taxes.[105]

The behaviour of the city officials and in particular the Mayor's office, that was at times inconsistent with market narrative being put forward to justify the erasure of the gardens, led some to hypothesize that over and above realizing the exchange value of the garden plots, Mayor Giuliani's intention was to neutralize spaces of resistance, and places that represented an alternative method of evaluating and creating value.

In other words, the de-commodified land, was threatening on some level. The community gardens in New York represent a radically different way of conceiving of land not as a commodity but as a commons. The land is embedded in the community and environment, and is important to urban biodiversity and also to the health of the community, the neighbourhood culture, and the many different cultures of the people who tend the gardens. The gardens represent a way for people, many of whom are underprivileged and marginalized, to take back their city and redefine public space as an area that they have produced both physically and conceptually so that it serves the needs of that community rather than a place the city creates and allows an atomized public to use it on condition that they follow a code of conduct set by the city authorities.[106]

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[104] Schmelzkopf, "Incommensurability, Land Use, and the Right to Space." 335-6
[105] Sarah Shearman, "In New York City's Lower East Side, Gardening Is a Political Act of Resistance," *The Guardian*, August 11, 2015, http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/aug/11/new-york-lower-east-side-community-gardens.
[106] Schmelzkopf, "Incommensurability, Land Use, and the Right to Space." 133

4. Ecologizing Labour and Land

As we have seen, the commodity designation of labour and land leads to serious social and environmental problems. The increasing atomisation of society, with concomitant social problems, and the deepening, and deeply worrying environmental crisis, lends credence to Polanyi's suggestion that the commodification of land and labour would ultimately lead to the annihilation of society and the environment.

As a society, for the health of our society and the integrity of the environment, it is important to redress this situation and take steps to decommodify both land and labour. Simple decommodification, however, is not enough. We need a clear picture of how labour and land is to be decommodified, and we need to decide how we want labour to be situated within, and how it should relate to, society and the environment. Polanyi, himself, while he used the term 'commodity', was not particularly enthusiastic about using the term 'decommodification' to describe his vision of an alternative society to market society. The 'de-'prefix, he felt, rather than having the decisive sense of a word such as 'depose', was weaker and carried a sense more like 'deflate' or 'demote'. 'Decommodified' describes the lack of something rather than a shift towards something else.[107] And indeed, it would hardly feel like much of a positive change if we de-commodified land and labour by switching over to a feudal style society.

With the general nature of the word 'decommodification' and it's reference to a negative, I refer to land and labour de-commodified according to the criteria below as 'ecologized' land and labour. The word

[107] Gareth Dale, "Social Democracy, Embeddedness and Decommodification: On the Conceptual Innovations and Intellectual Affiliations of Karl Polanyi," *New Political Economy* 15, no. 3 (2010): 386.

'ecologized' has previously been used generally to refer to legal system or social systems that have changed to take into account the protection of the natural environment.[108]

In the case of this paper, however, this word is used with reference to 'ecology' which refers to interrelationships within and between different systems, in order to stress land and labour's nature as dynamic systems which interact with other systems – particularly social systems – and indeed the systems of the natural environment which are evoked by the more commonly intended meaning of this word. This word choice is made with a view to stress the re-embedding of land and labour within those systems to ensure the healthy continued operation of those systems. This is in contradistinction to their conception in market society which sees land and labour as discrete phenomena that can be considered in isolation from other systems.

4.1. Ecologized labour

As we have seen from our exploration of commodified labour, it has disadvantageous characteristics. It's coercive, it commodifies the worker, it focuses on exchange value rather than use value, and the employee often has a restricted range of work activities. These characteristics can be experienced as a problem for the individual worker, but they can also tend to have a knock on effect to the health of society and the environment. The relative lack of control over what the worker does or for which company the worker does it, means that workers can end up working on projects that compromise natural systems because those projects are deemed necessary to generate profits for the company.

[108] C. Schmidt, "On Economization and Ecologization as Civilizing Processes," *Environmental Values* 2, no. 1 (1993): 33–46; Christian Deverre and Christine De Sainte Marie, "The Ecologization of European Union Agricultural Policy and Research Agenda. Which Theoretical Choices?," in *13. ISSRM: International Symposium on Society and Resource Management. Landscape Continuity and Change Social Science Perspectives and Interdisciplinary Contributions. 2007-06-172007-06-21, Park City UT, USA*, 2007, http://agris.fao.org/agris-search/search.do?recordID=FR2014001803.

Furthermore, given the profoundly negative nature of some of the characteristics of wage labour, the resultant depressed sense of subjective well-being of wage labourers can lead to increased material consumption.[109] This, in turn, leads to a greater environmental degradation through the increased extraction, manufacture and transport of those material consumables.

Redefining labour as ecologized rather than commodified; therefore, an obvious course of action if we would like to see an improvement in the well-being of working people and society, but also for the health and integrity of the natural environment. While it may seem unrealistic to totally de-commodify labour, at least immediately, it should be conceivable to begin to ecologize it by addressing the most damaging aspects of labour's commodification.

4.2. Criteria for Ecologized Labour

In an ideal situation, completely ecologized labour would be different from commodified labour and would be characterized by:

I. Emphasis on use-value of the labour and the organization's activities
II. Voluntary, non-coerced
III. Democratic – worker involvement in work and organization decision-making
IV. Opportunities for varied work and experiences
V. Woven into the life narrative of each person and community
VI. Woven into relationships that involved domestic and other forms of productive activity

[109] LinChiat Chang and Robert M. Arkin, "Materialism as an Attempt to Cope with Uncertainty," *Psychology & Marketing* 19, no. 5 (May 2002): 389–406.

While ‘dream jobs’ are often portrayed as something within the entertainment industry – rock star, or film star, once again it’s not really the nature of the work or the final product that’s conceived, but the popularity, the fame and the exchange value – the money - rather than, in the case of the rockstar, spending a long time rehearsing, recording, discussing designs for album artwork and merchandise and similarly spending large amounts of time on the road touring going from country to country and only seeing the inside of stadiums. In short, those who fantasize about having a dream job tend to focus on the exchange value rather than the use value of the job.

When we look at volunteering, however – work that people choose to undertake in their free time – we see that they *choose* the particular work they’re volunteering (when they’re not filling in their resume) not for the *exchange value*, as they receive no wages in return for the work, but for the work’s *use value*. The top motivations for volunteering are that the volunteer appreciates the value to society represented by the organisation’s activities, and because the volunteer has skills and abilities that he or she would like to use.

Ecologized labour would, similarly, have as its primary attraction for the prospective worker the role in society played by the organisation and the value of its activity.

Related to an emphasis on use-value rather than exchange value, ecologized labour would be voluntary. Members of society would not be forced to seek employment in order to avoid lack of access to resources and the stigma of living off charity. With the coercion to labour removed, it is conceivable that the reasons for choosing a position, as with volunteering, would be due to a sympathy with the goals, values, and activities of the enterprise.

An organization would be required to attract prospective workers with something other than wages. This would conceivably lead to a proliferation of organizations with interesting and laudable projects, and organizations that set up an agreeable workplace culture.

Ecologized labour would be characterized by workplace democracy. This could well be advanced as one of the attractions to work that would replace the wage reward. The workers performing the activities of the organization would also be involved in the decision making process of the organisation as part of their work. They would feedback information specific to the work they had been doing, and would have an opportunity to take part in creative problem solving and next steps. There would be increased opportunities for this kind of decision making in smaller groups targeting specific localized problems or opportunities to work in larger groups targeting organizational strategies.

An aspect of this workplace democracy would be an elimination of the workplace coercion that characterizes commodified labour. Workplace protocols would be followed because the workers had a hand in drafting them and therefore understood their purpose and importance in relation to the organization's overall mission, rather than because they wanted to avoid disciplinary action. There would be a sense of ownership rather than a sense of being coerced.

Related to the work-place democracy, the worker would have more flexible work. In contrast to commodified wage labour where the worker is compelled to work within the range of activities described in the contract of employment, the ecologized workplace would be characterized by a fluidity of roles and responsibilities. This is not the flexibility of the modern labour market where many workers subsist on a patchwork of temporary and part-time jobs. Workers would be able to explore and develop skillsets while getting to know the enterprise in which they work, and projects that the organization takes on. With modern wage labour, the employee has one role that is codified in the job specification in the contract and the worker seldom strays beyond the confines of the role described in those documents.

4.3. Labour - The Universal Basic Income

One very simple tool that very quickly and simply would go a long way to decommodifying labour is ironically, the Universal Basic Income or UBI. It is a non-withdrawable stipendium for which everyone is eligible, and everyone automatically receives it throughout their lives. It is universal so everyone receives it regardless of age, income, or employment status. And they would continue to receive it throughout their lives. It is a little ironic to suggest this, seeing as Polanyi wrote a great deal about what he felt were the pernicious effects of a superficially similar scheme in 1700s England, the Speenhamland outdoor relief laws, in which agricultural labourers had their wages topped up by the parish. He felt that these laws further immiserated the poor and further drove them into the industrial centres to sell their labour.[110] Though on subsequent analysis of the data around the Speenhamland laws, Fred Block and Margaret Somers have shown that the actual effects of those laws were, in fact, positive to the health of the rural communities.[111]

The most obvious benefits of this plan, before looking at the specific social and environmental effects, is that it is relatively simple to enact, in that it requires some adjustment to the taxation regime, and it is a very simple to administer payment to every citizen regardless of income or circumstances. In fact, this last aspect is somewhat disadvantageous to some current forms of employment in that it would result in a drastic simplification of the benefits department and the elimination of some positions within government bureaucracy.

Part of what makes it so attractive as a method for decommodifying labour is that it is not an unknown quantity. In the 60s and 70s it was considered, discussed, and indeed studied, by many policymakers. It was even seriously considered by US President Nixon,[112] Currently, a form of UBI is to undergo a field

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[110] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*. Ch 7

[111] Fred Block and Margaret Somers, "In the Shadow of Speenhamland: Social Policy and the Old Poor Law," *Politics & Society* 31, no. 2 (2003): 283–323.

[112] Evelyn L. Forget, "The Town with No Poverty: The Health Effects of a Canadian Guaranteed Annual Income Field Experiment," *Canadian Public Policy* 37, no. 3 (2011): 4.

trial in Finland in 2017, and a pilot project was started in January 2016 in Utrecht, Netherlands.[113] Furthermore, it has a variety of advocates from across the political spectrum. Some commentators who situate their ideology on the right like it because it drastically simplifies and changes government bureaucratic procedures, thus reducing the state's role in providing benefits to people. In the current welfare regimes in many countries, people receive conditional benefits that are adjusted according to a whole host of factors – income, spousal or family income, other benefits, dependants, housing situation – and indeed age (the UBI would replace state pensions). These benefits need to be applied for with documents that support that applicant's eligibility, whether, for example, it's a letter from a doctor in support of sickness benefit, or a Record Of Employment (ROE) from a previous employer proving that employment was terminated. The benefits are conditional, so as well as evaluating the initial application, the applicants are constantly evaluated to see whether or not they are still eligible for the benefits. This use of human and financial resources would be drastically reduced if everyone received, unconditionally, the same amount of money.[114]

In terms of decommodifying labour, a UBI at above bare subsistence would address a very serious negative effect of commodified labour: coercion. If the UBI is set at a level comfortably above subsistence, citizens would no longer be forced to take a job, and would no longer be forced to take the first one they were offered in order to minimize the amount of time they spend unemployed. The result of this is that the citizen would have the freedom to choose the job most appropriate for their situation, their skills and needs, and indeed their place of residence. If the citizen was unable to find a suitable job, that citizen would, perhaps, be able to pursue education full-time, and receiving UBI, would be able to focus their time and attention on their studies instead of dividing it between their studies and a part

[113] Jeremy Runnalls, "The Simplest Way to Tackle Poverty," *Corporate Knights*, March 16, 2016, http://www.corporateknights.com/channels/leadership/the-simplest-way-to-tackle-poverty-14581080/.
[114] Malcolm Torry, *Money for Everyone* (Policy Press, 2013), Ch. 13.

time job worked to provide subsistence. Receiving UBI, of course, the citizen need not automatically focus on finding paid employment. Instead, the citizen might be more inclined to try to start his or her own business, or perhaps focus on the arts. Indeed, the citizen may choose not to work seeing as he or she is receiving a comfortable income regardless of work, thus cutting his or her environmental impact down to that embodied in the citizen's consumption.

The effect of this removal of the coercion to work would turn a buyer's market into a seller's market. The worker could choose whether or not he or she takes on a job. The employer would therefore have to rely less - or not at all - on money as a reward in order to attract labour, and instead to work to promote the job's intrinsic qualities. The employer might promote the very nature - how the work itself benefits the employee, or the employer might promote the end product of the work. In this case, the employer would be emphasizing the use value of the job, and at the same time re-embedding the work into society or the environment. If the UBI is enacted properly and used in tandem with other policy tools, some of the more socially and environmentally destructive industries may not survive the transition to the UBI.

Other ways the employer may have to attract labour is by making the workplace more attractive. The employer might do this by changing the work culture, by creating a more social workplace and integrating socializing into the work activities. Basically the employer would be making work a more social experience. The employer may change the management structure of the organization so that the workers have more control over what work they do by having a say in the overall management of the organization. The employer would thus be offering the worker more control at work over the work. The employer would basically offer workplace democracy.

If a citizen were so inclined he or she, might prefer not to work. And, this is where we run into one of the objections to UBI. Conventional wisdom would suggest that if a person receives subsistence without

having to work, that person would choose not to work, and if everyone in society were to receive subsistence without having to work, everyone would choose not to work. Another argument is that people appreciate rewards for the work they do, and the reward they receive is their wage. Therefore, people try to do as good a job as they can in order to realize their cash rewards. According to this wisdom a UBI would either result in slipshod work and therefore, generate goods and services of varying and generally low quality, or a total halt on the economy as everyone chose not to go to work.

This idea, while it seems reasonable, on closer examination appears to be very similar to the assumptions made by early economists and utilitarians that became axiomatic in economics that work is a disutility only to be undertaken for the greatest profit.[115] It seems that these assumptions have been accepted and internalized by market society as a cultural understanding. This has been described as 'commodification as worldview' which involves seeing commodification as the only way of relating[116] and this would be one of the major obstacles to instituting not only a UBI, but to a project of the de-commodification of labour. This 'commodified worldview' is, in specific regard to labour, the intuitive and taken-for-granted notion that one works not for intrinsic motivation or for the reward of seeing a good job well done, but for rewards in the form of money and benefits. And, while this forms a major obstacle not just to UBI, but to the entire project of the de-commodification of labour, de-commodifying our worldview would be one of the greater rewards of the project.

Luckily, there have been some experiments with UBI, and practices that have some elements of UBI in various locations across the world, the results of which can be used to counter some of the objections to

[115] Barry Schwartz, "Rethinking Work," *The New York Times*, August 28, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/30/opinion/sunday/rethinking-work.html.
[116] David McNally, "The Commodity Status of Labour: The Secret of Commodified Life'," *Not For Sale: Decommodifying Public Life*, 2006, 50.

UBI. The three drawn on below took place in Namibia, India, and in a small town in Manitoba, Canada between 1974 and 1979, where it went by the name MINCOME.

While, from a commodified worldview, it makes sense that people would choose a life of idleness rather than work if they received UBI, it turns out that the UBI does not stop people from working and does not result in a worsening of the quality of work. In Namibia, a version of the UBI was tested, and the list of benefits were as long as they were surprising, at least to someone with a commodified worldview. For a start, it did not result in an epidemic of idleness but rather the opposite. The average income, *not including the UBI,* rose by 200%! This suggests either more work or better work or a combination of the two. People did not restrict themselves to looking for waged work but, with the UBI, were instilled with confidence to start their own businesses or projects, many of which addressed the needs of the community. Some took on own account work such as growing vegetables for the community. Also, the number of people involved in sex work fell due to the increased economic independence of women. In short, the UBI did not promote laziness or alcoholism as had been feared, but resulted in better paying more dignified work.[117]

People in the Namibian UBI scheme also engaged in small infrastructure projects such as building latrines. This benefit of UBI was mirrored in a similar scheme in a very different context. In a slum in India a version of UBI was tried and it was found that residents pooled their money and spent them on developing infrastructure projects to aid the community, projects such as drains, toilets and roads.

The benefits from UBI extend beyond work and into other areas of life. It has a positive impact on health and on education. In the UBI experiment in India, citizens spent their incomes on health services. In the Namibian experiment, child malnutrition dropped from 42% to just 17% and overall, attendance to

[117] Torry, *Money for Everyone*. 69 - 74

clinics improved. In the MINCOME UBI experiment, it was found that in hospitalizations decreased for accident and injuries, and also mental health complaints decreased.

UBI benefits the community in terms of education. In the Indian experiment, more money was spent on education, and school attendance trebled while performance doubled. It was also found that more girls attended school. In Namibia, drop out rates fell from 40% to close to zero, and school attendance increased dramatically in that the number or parents paying school fees rose to around 90%. in the MINCOME experiment in rural Saskatchewan, a drop in work recorded for adolescents suggests that they focussed on finishing school and graduating.[118]

On top of the interesting and exciting positive social outcomes, and most important if not least for the argument of this paper, is that UBI has a beneficial effect on society's interaction with the natural environment. In the evaluation of the outcomes of the Namibian scheme, it was found that it promoted behaviour that cared for and promoted a healthy natural environment. This supports the environmental rationale behind UBI as a method to decommodify labour.

4.4. Criticism of UBI

4.4.1. Misspending money

It has been argued by many different actors including NGOs in the case of the Namibian experiment who would have rather seen the money spent on projects that benefited the community such as building schools for the community rather than transferring the cash straight to community members in the form of a UBI. The argument was that it would be counter-productive to give cash transfers with no conditions for receiving the cash, and no obligations about where the money should be spent. The fear was that, far from helping the recipient of the cash transfer, the recipient would be tempted to spend

[118] Forget, "The Town with No Poverty." 5

the money on frivolous or destructive things, for instance, entertainment, gambling, alcohol, controlled substances, prostitution, and the like.[119] This would, obviously be a disaster for the individual, and a sizeable fraction of society engaging in these spending behaviours would be disastrous for society as a whole.

This criticism of UBI, suggests a fear born of a paternalistic distrust of poor people, which in turn suggests a suspicion that the poor have personal defects which landed them in poverty in the first place, and those personal defects will lead to an unwise and possibly antisocial use of 'free' money. In the UBI experiments, however, this criticism has not really been borne out. Rather than succumb to the deadly sins of sloth and gluttony, UBI recipients have used the money in socially responsible ways as discussed earlier. They have stayed in school, or have taken the opportunity to start their own businesses, or done work to benefit the community.

The question this criticism in turn raises is, if a UBI does not increase unwise spending and risky behaviour, why do people indulge in such activities in a situation where they do not receive free money? A partial answer to this can be found in Mullanaithan's *Scarcity: why having so little means so much*. Some of the effects of poverty and the insecurity it creates, and indeed the insecurity of precarious employment, include the finding that the stresses can seriously compromises the individual's mental capacity. It can result in a 14 point drop in IQ scores. This is the difference between a superior score and average, or more worryingly, between average and borderline deficient. More pertinent to argument of risky behaviour, though, is that this drop in mental capacity caused by financial insecurity specifically gives rise to the behaviours - erroneously assumed to be innate character traits – such as impulsivity, poor self-control, the poor ability to plan for the long-term, and of course, poor financial decisions.[120]

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[119] Torry, *Money for Everyone*. 73

[120] Sendhil Mullainathan and Eldar Shafir, *Scarcity: Why Having Too Little Means so Much*, First edition. (New York : Times Books, Henry Holt and Company, 2013).

All of these traits are associated with poor financial decisions and indeed the risky behaviour and less than savoury purchases that have been surmised to be a likely result of the UBI, and yet they are the product of precisely the phenomena that UBI proposes to address: namely poverty. In which case, we could reasonably assume that rather than give full reign to these behaviours, the UBI would result in a significant reduction of these behaviours to the benefit of the individual and society.

4.4.2. Inadequate in de-commodifying

Arguments have also come from the left that the UBI doesn't fully or satisfactorily decommodify labour. As Meiksins Wood identified, the origin of capitalism is characterized by forcing of labourers into markets, both the labour market to commodify their labour – which the UBI is supposed to address – but also markets for everything else: basic needs, accommodation, food, transport, entertainment etc.[121] In other words, while the worker's labour has been partially decommodified, the worker's overall existence has not. There is still a strong role for a commodified worldview for the worker.[122]

The thrust of the argument for UBI, however, is not the total decommodification of workers. While that would certainly be nice, it is important to start the decommodification process in a realistic and pragmatic manner that delivers both the social and environmental benefits that we need - and a UBI would go some way to ecologizing labour, if not the worker's entire experience, and at the same time start to deliver those social and environmental benefits.

[121] Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999). 140
[122] Vida Panitch, "Basic Income, Decommodification and the Welfare State," *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 2011, 3 191453711413715.

4.5. Ecologized Land Use: Community Land Trusts, Transition Towns

While commodification of nature continues apace with the patenting of genes of people for their disease resistance, and the patenting of crop varieties, both existing and newly genetically engineered, it is important to address the initial commodification of nature – the commodification of land itself. One way to do this is to institute land as a commons for the members of society to use and responsibly steward in a reversal of the process of the commodification of land that Polanyi addressed in The Great Transformation.

In rich industrialized countries where commons have long been appropriated, enclosed, and commodified, various sections of society are striving to, and in some cases succeeding in, creating systems of property management that closely resemble a commons. The Community Gardens in New York have already been described earlier in this paper. There, members of the community organically occupied abandoned spaces and as a community came up with rules to administer their spaces. Similarly, the former employees of Teatro Valle in Rome, occupied the building after the government withdrew its support and they continued to run it as a theatre.[123] What these two examples show is the importance of grassroots community organization and self-governance of their commons. It also shows that despite a centuries long lacuna in the practice of administering a commons, the commons in some form or other is still something that citizens, given the opportunity, are able to spontaneously create.

In some developing countries, communities are working to retain or adapt their commons. In developed countries, while the exact mechanism by which a community would govern its use of land would differ from country to country and even from district to district, a model for land use that is similar to commons and facilitates social equity and environmentally responsible land use can be found in the

[123] Bollier, *Think like a Commoner*. 136

experience of land trusts – specifically Community Land Trusts – and also in the Transition Town movement.

4.5.1. Community Land Trusts

Land Trusts have long been used by conservation agencies to take land out of the market for conservation purposes related to sensitive ecosystems, unique natural landscapes or threatened or endangered species.[124] Community Land Trusts (CLTs), differ from conservation land trusts, in that they represent land taken out of the market system in order to facilitate human use of that land, particularly keeping housing affordable for low-income community members. The first CLT in the US, however, was instituted to provide black farmers with land for agricultural use[125] which suggests the flexibility of the land trust and the uses to which they can be put. As such they play a vital role in protecting members of the community from some of the negative effects of land as a commodity. Community land trusts however, can play a significant role in rolling back the commodification of land and can serve to ecologize the land.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs), like conservation land trusts, take land out of the market system by purchasing land and holding it in trust for specific use-value purposes rather than to realize a profit. They have, on the whole, been created with the primary purpose of providing affordable housing to residents, but also with a view to curbing gentrification.[126] The land is then leased to residents at a below market cost, and they buy just the house, rather than the land which makes up a significant portion of the cost of the house. Should the residents then sell their homes, due to the land being taken

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[124] Richard Brewer, *Conservancy: The Land Trust Movement in America* (UPNE, 2004), https://books-google-ca.ezproxy.library.yorku.ca/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Dk4CljmyjkcC&oi=fnd&pg=PR3&dq=community+land+trust+board&ots=0bG8KEu7iv&sig=6-dxyepSPyAmEfTqwcug-2tfNTs.

[125] Steven C. Bourassa, "The Community Land Trust as a Highway Environmental Impact Mitigation Tool," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 28, no. 4 (2006): 401.

[126] Steven D. Soifer, "The Burlington Community Land Trust: A Socialist Approach to Affordable Housing?," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 12, no. 3 (1990): 240.

out of the transaction they would not realize the same kind of profit, than in non-CLT property. This keeps the housing affordable and tacitly discourages the kind of speculation that leads to spiralling housing costs, and to the kind of landbanking that we see in areas with inflated real estate prices such as London, UK.

What makes the CLT appropriate as a model for a commons aimed at supporting environmentally friendly human activity is that the land trust board is typically made up of one third residents who are elected by the community that live and work on the land owned by the trust.[127] The board makes decisions about land use, purchasing new land to add to the trust, and about how they manage their funds. For example, the Burlington CLT in Vermont made the decision to divest its holdings in South African stocks and corporations and invest in the local community instead.[128] This was presumably a morally motivated decision as well as a community motivated decision which is precisely the kind of motivation that lies behind environmentally friendly actions. And, given that private citizens are generally more positively disposed toward environmental stewardship than corporations or investors,[129] it is likely that CLT boards would be more disposed towards environmental stewardship than real estate companies.

The overriding benefit of CLTs is that they can be rolled out relatively quickly. They are not a particularly fringe idea and can work within the current property regime. While they take land out of the market system, they do so by first participating in the market system and purchasing land in the first place. And indeed, as has been mentioned, there are many already in operation, and many of those are successful. They have some appeal to mainstream politics in that they deal with the social problems of

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[127] Bourassa, "The Community Land Trust as a Highway Environmental Impact Mitigation Tool."
[128] Steven D. Soifer, "The Burlington Community Land Trust: A Socialist Approach to Affordable Housing?," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 12, no. 3 (1990): 248.
[129] The Environics Institute, "Focus Canada 2015: Canadian Public Opinion about Climate Change" (David Suzuki Foundation, 2015).

accommodation affordability and avoid some of the problems of other solutions to that problem, namely having to provide subsidies that increase along with the market price of land, or legislate rent controls. Further benefits of CLTs include the fact that the money saved on accommodation by residents is usually recycled back into the local economy.[130]

The purpose of CLTs is generally to provide affordable housing to residents, and this is written into its bylaws.[131] As such it is focussed on the *use value* of the land rather than its exchange value which is an important aspect of ecologized land use. If CLTs are adopted as ecologized land use, the bylaws at the outset, could be written in such a way that they would define environmentally sustainable land use and emphasize that type of use for the land. As such it would also list the ways in which the community that used the land would encourage and facilitate just that kind of land use, and the sanctions that would be employed should the by-laws be transgressed.

CLTs provide a model for taking land out of the commodity circuit and subsequently ecologizing it. CLTs define a use-value for the land rather than using it to generate ever more return on investment; they contain elements of democracy in that residents are involved in decision making about how to fulfill the purpose of the CLT, and the land to gain exchange value, and including residents in administration decisions about how to carry out the aims of the CLT.

4.5.2. The Transition movement.

CLTs could draw on elements of environmental NGO organizing and activism in order to facilitate responsible environmental stewardship, and also to further strengthen community. The Transition

[130] Ibid. 240
[131] Bourassa, "The Community Land Trust as a Highway Environmental Impact Mitigation Tool."412

movement – its ethos and activities – provides a model from which CLTs could draw to further institute ecologized land.

The transition movement can be seen as a grass roots response to the environmental crisis taking the twin problems of peak oil and climate change specifically as its focus for change. It has branched off from the permaculture movement, and the Transition movement is very much indebted to permaculture as its foundational philosophy. One of the founders of the permaculture movement whose work is referenced in the Transition literature, David Holmgren, describes permaculture as "consciously designed landscapes which mimic the patterns and relationships found in nature."[132]

The Transition movement has gained great traction among the public and since its inception in 2005, by 2011 had sprouted 714 separate initiatives in 31 countries.[133] Part of its attraction could be down to its positive framing of the response necessary to the challenges posed by peak oil and climate change. In contrast to other environmental organisations that frame the solution in terms of living leanly or making sacrifices, Hopkins the founder of Transition suggests that "a future with less oil may be preferable to the present"[134]

Another part of its attraction could be down to the scale at which it works: the community-level or the meso-scale. Much of the environmental movement targets individual consumer behaviour: the micro-level,[135] and some addresses human behaviour at the state or global level: the macro-level.[136] Both of these levels can instill a sense of frustration and powerlessness in citizens. Action at the meso-level,

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[132] David Holmgren qtd. In Gerald Aiken, "Community Transitions to Low Carbon Futures in the Transition Towns Network (TTN)," *Geography Compass* 6, no. 2 (2012): 92.
[133] Peter J. Taylor, "Transition Towns and World Cities: Towards Green Networks of Cities," *Local Environment* 17, no. 4 (2012): 495–508.
[134] Rob Hopkins qtd. In John Barry and Stephen Quilley, "The Transition to Sustainability: Transition Towns and Sustainable Communities," *The Transition to Sustainable Living and Practice* 4 (2009): 2.
[135] Aiken, "Community Transitions to Low Carbon Futures in the Transition Towns Network (TTN).90
[136] Friends of the Earth, "UK climate campaign," Text, *Friends of the Earth*, (May 19, 2014), https://www.foe.co.uk/page/uk-climate-campaign.

however, is both eminently achievable and can yield appreciable results. A community owned and controlled renewable energy project for a neighbourhood for example would feel like more of an effective action to combat climate change, than replacing one's appliances with energy star rated ones, and practicing energy saving behaviours.

And in fact, this is precisely what CLTs could draw from Transition: a common community goal on which the community members work together, backed by a positive vision of where they would like to be. And, the local community response to the challenge of climate change and energy use could provide this. In this sense, it can be seen as an extension and elaboration of the work the CLT already does to involve the community in decisions that affect the land on which their community lives and works. Members of Transition Initiatives work as a community to address specific problems they identify as contributing to the degradation of the environment. Groups within various transition initiatives have worked on formulating and implementing more environmentally sustainable ways to address health, education, the economy and energy.[137]

Transition towns are, however, primarily focussed on food sovereignty and hold up UK citizens' role in cultivating food for domestic consumption during the Second World War as an aspirational example. The food economy was made much more local due to exports from the Empire having been cut off. Part of the reason for this - other than the fact that Transition stemmed from permaculture - is presumably because growing food is a fairly inexpensive and simple task to undertake that can have very quick results. Transition works on the goal of achieving a similar level of food sovereignty and self-sufficiency

[137] Phil Connors and Peter McDonald, "Transitioning Communities: Community, Participation and the Transition Town Movement," *Community Development Journal* 46, no. 4 (2011): 563.

through urban organic agriculture. This then mirrors what's happening in other parts of the world with indigenous people's struggles.[138]

The benefits of this intra- and inter-community work is that it increases social capital. In particular, it increases agency – the community has the power and the venue to be able to make the changes they would like to see in their community. This improves trust and well-being within a community. As well, as taking control over their community and improving its relationship to the natural environment, they are also building a strong and well-connected community. Social capital has been correlated with higher levels of reported trust within a community.[139]

Conclusion.

The leverage point from which we are able to begin the process of decommodifying nature is through decommodifying the land on which communities live through instituting Community Land Trusts run according to an ethos similar to that of Transition Towns, namely responsible stewardship of the natural environment. This would fulfill the criteria outlined above for *ecologized* land. It would remove the profit motive from land purchase while also removing concentrated ownership. It would also institute a purpose to which that land would be put, namely providing affordable housing to residents, and designing the community to work consciously to encourage, restore, and preserve natural systems. And, finally it would involve the community members in decisions around how exactly to carry out the aims of the CLT.

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[138] William K. Carroll, "Crisis, Movements, Counter-Hegemony: In Search of the New," *Interface* 2, no. 2 (2010): 179.

[139] Lenore Newman and Ann Dale, "The Role of Agency in Sustainable Local Community Development," *Local Environment* 10, no. 5 (2005): 477–486.

5. Final Conclusion

5.1. Ecologizing people

> "Labour is only another name for a human activity which goes with *life* itself, which is in turn not produced for sale but for entirely different reasons, nor can that activity be detached from the rest of life"
>
> "[T]he economic function is but one of many vital functions of land. It invests man's life with stability; it is the site of his habitation; it is a condition of his physical safety; it is the landscape and the seasons. We might as well imagine his being born without hands and feet as carrying on his life without land."
>
> "Leaving the fate of soil and people to the market would be tantamount to annihilating them."[140]

A commodity is something produced to be sold on the market in order to realize a profit. Karl Polanyi remarked in 1944 in *The Great Transformation* that labour and land were unsuitable for commodification, that labour couldn't be stored up for future use like other commodities, and that land is not produced. The complete commodification of labour and land, if left unchecked would result in the annihilation of society and of nature. This paper is important because we are seeing, while not complete 'annihilation', at least some less than desirable social effects of this commodification of labour and land. We are seeing some evidence of an increase in mental health problems and atomization of society in some countries.[141] We are also seeing unprecedented and severe global environmental problems. While, the environmental problems may not exclusively be the result of commodified labour and land, their commodification has definite negative social and environmental effects.

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[140] Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*. 75, 187, 140

[141] Jared Keller, "Americans Are Staying as Far Away From Each Other as Possible — Pacific Standard," *Medium*, June 11, 2015, https://psmag.com/americans-are-staying-as-far-away-from-each-other-as-possible-2cf83f377043#.vwyd5ztbd.

There are several surprising things that come out of the study of this subject matter that we get from this paper, or rather things that run counter to common wisdom.

Rather than requiring a top down hierarchical work organization, people can spontaneously and responsively design workflows that can deal with complex tasks such as creating an on-line encyclopaedia,[142] writing a computer operating system, [143] or designing, implementing, maintaining – and indeed defending – a city garden in a constrained space but that has multiple social uses while increasing local biodiversity. They can even work well with a shifting and inconsistent workforce to create a product like Linux or Wikipedia that corners the market, or New York Community gardens that become so famous and beloved that tours of those same gardens are organized and advertised to tourists.[144]

This is important because it shows that people not only respond well to de-commodified labour and land, but that de-commodified labour and land can work exceptionally well. These examples illustrate that people relish the opportunity and challenge inherent in non-commodified labour and land.

Similarly, contrary to the assumptions of neo-classical economics that define work as a disutility, people actually want to work. As was illustrated from the examples of volunteering, Timebanks, Wikipedia and Linux, people have a wide variety of motivations for working beside financial gain which are directly related to the activity of work and to the final product. People have skills that they want to put to use, they like the aims and philosophy of the organization,[145] they want the bragging rights of building something popular and successful, and some stated that they even liked the idea of working for free.[146]

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[142] Mason, *Postcapitalism*. 39
[143] Bantjes, *Social Movements in a Global Context*. 181 - 184
[144] "Food & Farm Trolley Tours," accessed July 26, 2016, http://www.ilovethebronx.com/index.php/happenings/bronx-food-and-farm-trolley-tours.
[145] McClintock, *Understanding Canadian Volunteers*.4
[146] Mason, *Postcapitalism*. 128

This shows the further importance of this paper. This discredits the assumptions behind neoclassical economics. Some people jump at the chance of performing non-commodified labour. Not only can people spontaneously organize complex work flows, but enjoy working, and don't necessarily need to demand a return on their labour.

Indeed, evolutionary biologists have discovered that while self-interested behaviour certainly does benefit the individual, altruistic behaviour of individuals within a group benefits the group.[147] This means that there is a dynamic tension within humans between selfish behaviour and altruistic behaviour but the modern technological industrial societies of the world run on economies that operate, perversely, under the erroneous assumption that we are all *only* self-interested and regard work as a disutility.

Furthermore, what in the standard narrative were thought to be incentives to work and work harder – cash reward, and desire to get out of poverty – turn out to have quite perverse effects. Cash reward switches social norms with market norms: selfishness, anti-sociality, unwillingness to help, desire to work alone, and unwillingness to ask for help. [148] Similarly, while poverty creates the *desire* to get out of poverty, it doesn't create the tools. Instead, it causes a drop in IQ and encourages risky, impulsive, and ill-thought-out behaviour.[149]

All of this is very compelling. This paper illustrates that neoclassical economics' assumptions about human behaviour and motivation are quite wrong. This paper also shows that people in commodified societies will often take the opportunity to create non-commodified labour, and non-commodified land use. This would certainly ease a large scale switch to de-commodifying both labour and land. Given all of this it would seem a shame *not* to de-commodify land and labour. Humans seem to have a natural aptitude for and predisposition towards decommodifying land and labour.

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[147] Bollier, *Think like a Commoner*. 82-3
[148] Ariely, *Predictably Irrational*.
[149] Mullainathan and Shafir, *Scarcity*.

5.2. Areas for Further Inquiry

5.2.1. The Function of poverty.

The UBI has been put forward by anti-poverty activists as a solution to the social problem of poverty. This is a problem vitally important to the health of society as a whole to solve, not just for those in poverty. It has, however, been observed by Herbert Gans that poverty provides a functions that maintain society as a whole. One of these functions is to compel those in poverty to work jobs that no-one else would like to work, namely jobs that are dangerous, undignified, and menial.[150]

The UBI was posited as a way to de-commodify labour in such a way as to remove the compulsion to work and to introduce an element of added choice into the careers that people have. It was hypothesized that some labour sectors might disappear, namely those with negative environmental and social impacts. It is, however, entirely possible that necessary labour sectors might be threatened due to matters of taste such as refuse collection. Would there be a risk that by de-commodifying labour with the UBI, and addressing poverty, society would face the crisis of a lack of willing workers to complete jobs that were distasteful?

An avenue for further study, therefore, would be to look at labour participation in those jurisdictions that are currently embarking on UBI or field trials to see what if any sectors suffer from under participation. It would also be helpful to complete research to gain insight into the 'functions of poverty' in developed countries to further understand the risks of implementing the UBI.

Another avenue in response to this would be to look at the participation income idea – the UBI but receipt of funds is conditional on performing labour – but also look at the practice in Japanese schools

[150] Susan P. Robbins, *Contemporary Human Behavior Theory : A Critical Perspective for Social Work* (Montreal: Allyn & Bacon, 2012). 32

where there are no janitors as the students themselves clean and tidy the school at the end of the day.[151] This could be used as a model for the more distasteful jobs in society, that they be performed by community members, as an act of social service. The study would be to see whether there is a change in attitude towards the job, whether there is a sense of ownership and engagement with the community and pride in the community.

5.2.2 Marcuse's 'false needs'

Having posited that consumerism is one of the drivers of the kinds of activity that lead to a degradation of the environment, it is important to see whether ecologized labour and land lead to a reduction in consumption. Marcuse suggests that a person has 'true needs' – food, shelter, warmth; and 'false needs' – those goods and services that the person purchases because marketing has told him or her that they are desirable.[152]

A further avenue of study would be to see if consumption dropped after the establishment of a UBI. In other words is Seyfang's supposition correct, that unmet social and spiritual needs leads to increased consumption.[153] If so an increase in strength of community, and the possibility of more time off from work is possible for both ecologized labour and ecologized land. If these possibilities are realized, would they constitute a protective factor against adverts and their narratives? Or, is it possible that the lifestyle of heavy consumption is too far engrained at this point, and even with the establishment of a UBI and the benefits it would likely bring, would something else be needed to help reduce people's tendency to high consumption to feed their 'false needs' at this point in time? Further study would

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[151] Owen Phillips, "Without Janitors, Students Are In Charge Of Keeping School Shipshape," *NPR.org*, accessed July 29, 2016, http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/04/04/396621542/without-janitors-students-are-in-charge-of-keeping-school-shipshape.

[152] Herbert Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society.* -- (Boston: Beacon Press, 1964). 139

[153] Gill Seyfang, "Low-Carbon Currencies: The Potential of Time Banking and Local Money Systems for Community Carbon-Reduction" (CSERGE working paper EDM, 2009), 9 http://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/48800.

focus on the reduction of consumption in previous attempts at the UBI, and possibly into the values people currently place into their 'false needs' through a survey.

5.2.3. Philosophies of land stewardship

We saw how land, commodified through the selling of timber harvesting rights by Canadian provincial governments strongly incents clear-cutting. This was contrasted with the Pluto Darkwoods in BC, Canada where its owners harvested timber sustainably in such a way that the forests provided habitat where species threatened in other parts of BC, flourished and thrived.[154]

The Pluto Darkwoods, however, though they were contrasted with commodified land, were commodified land themselves. The reasons given for the sustainable management of the Darkwoods were given as stemming from the owner's experience in Germany. Silviculture in Germany is a cultural institution due to historical circumstance. A couple of centuries ago the forests of Germany had become very degraded due to over-harvesting, a sustainable mindset was developed in response to this.

Seeing as ecologizing land is an institutional intervention that has cultural ramifications, it's important to look into cultural institutions that lead societies into environmentally responsible stewardship behaviours to see how they could be adapted and adopted into different cultures. Interesting examples to start with are, in Madagascar, the cultural taboos around certain areas of spiny forest. They are thought of as 'sacred fences' that stop the local populations from exploiting those areas, and in fact form part of the national conservation strategy.[155] A similar strategy to this can be found in Thailand where Buddhist monks ordain trees, thus making them inviolate and protecting the part of the forest in

[154] Bruce Kirby, "Conserving the Darkwoods in British Columbia (Page 4)."
[155] Resilience Alliance, "Assessing Resilience in Social-Ecological Systems: Workbook for Practitioners," report, (2010), http://naturalresources.intersearch.com.au/naturalresourcesjspui/bitstream/1/3527/1/Resilience Alliance 2010.pdf.

which the tree stands. These can be seen as methods of valuing nature and ecosystem services that are an alternative to pricing.[156]

5.3. Final thoughts

Ecologizing land and labour are vital first steps to improving human relations with the natural world and improving social relations. While they are not easy steps to take, they are practicable, and people and communities have jumped at the chance to decommodify labour or land on many occasions, and in studying these 'leaps' we have seen much that overturns conventional wisdom or common sense.

Erich Fromm, wrote of the UBI beyond the decommodification of labour, suggesting making theatres free, libraries, schools, museums, and transport free at point of use, arguing that the consumption of free public services that enable the individual to enjoy life do not evoke greed the way that the consumption of things can.

Similarly, he suggests also making food free. In the beginning, the acquisitive may take more food than they need, but they would soon learn the lesson that it's no fun eating more food than one should, and it's a pain to have to deal with spoiled or rotting food. Thus one learns temperance, or merely that one *can* have enough. He suggests that this may challenge the Western concept of freedom from freedom to own and freedom to consume, with the concept of freedom as true independence.[157]

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[156] Hemanth Withange, "The Story of Tree Ordination in Sri Lanka," accessed July 29, 2016, http://www.foei.org/news/the-story-of-tree-ordination-in-sri-lanka.

[157] Erich Fromm, "The Psychological Aspects of the Guaranteed Income," *The Guaranteed Income. Next Step in Economic Evolution*, 1966, 175–184.

The successful decommodification of labour could be the basis for a respectful relationship with nature and a fulfilling relationship with work. It could lay the groundwork for further decommodification as mentioned above, leading to a better more fulfilling relationship with the things that surround us and with which we surround ourselves, because the decommodification of labour and land would be a large first step in a decommodification of the worldview.

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